

NOVEMBER 2008
\$4.99

RELIEF WORK

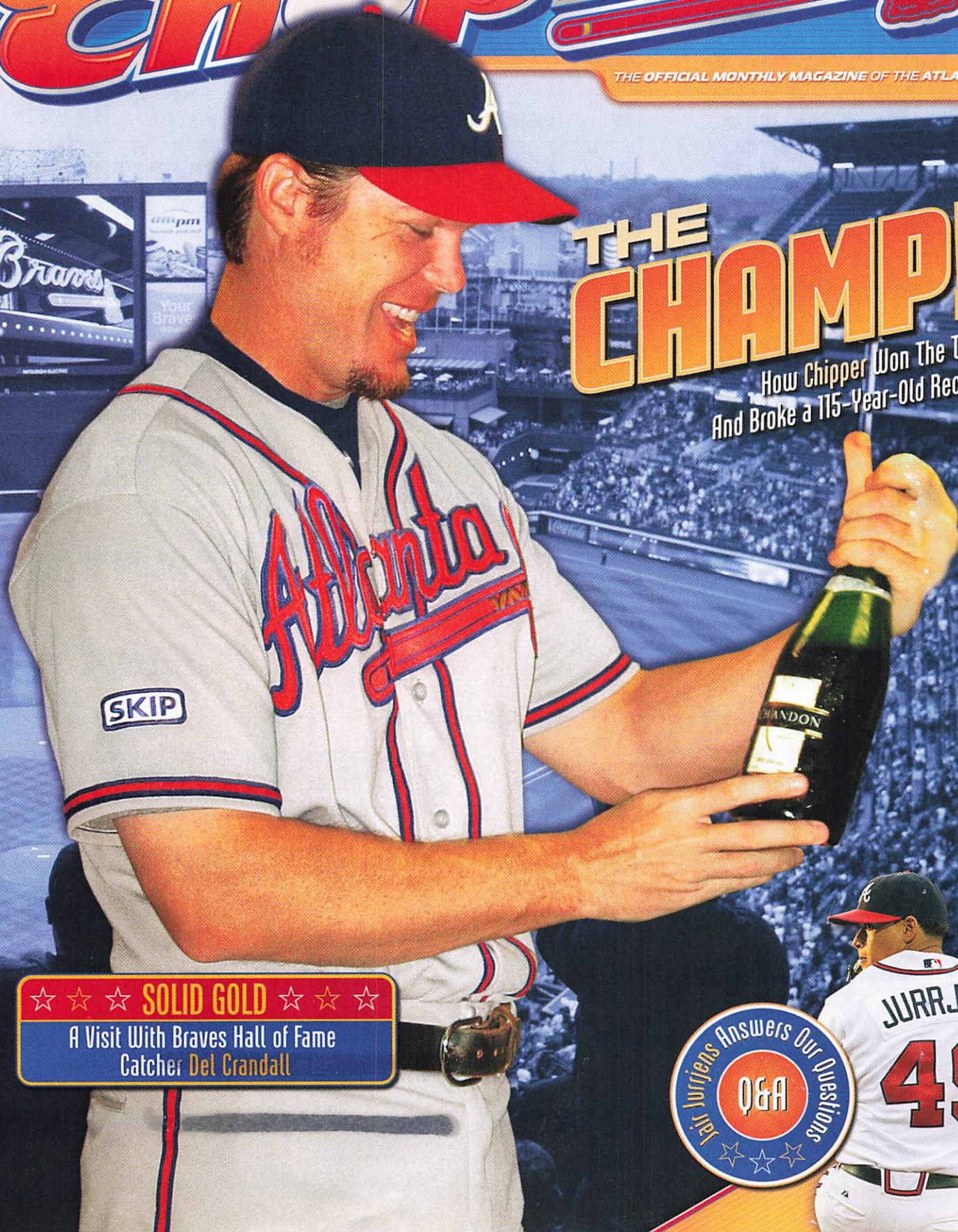
Gonzalez and Family Pitch In To Help
Bail Out Ike-Soaked Houstonians

CHIP TALK

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE ATLANTA BRAVES

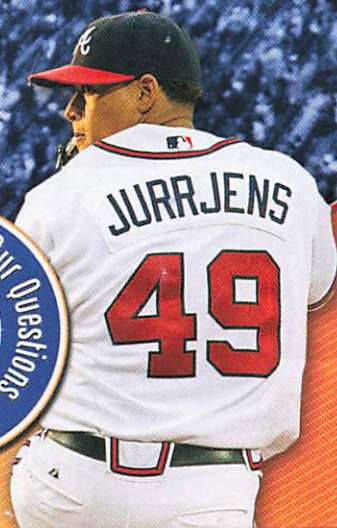
THE CHAMP!

How Chipper Won The Title
And Broke a 115-Year-Old Record



☆☆☆ SOLID GOLD ☆☆☆

A Visit With Braves Hall of Fame
Catcher Del Crandall





2009 SEASON SCHEDULE

GET YOUR TICKET PLANS NOW

APRIL

			1	2	3	4
					DET*	DET*
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	PHI		PHI	PHI	WAS	WAS
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
WAS		FLA	FLA	FLA	PIT	PIT
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
PIT	WAS	WAS	WAS		CIN	CIN
26	27	28	29	30		
CIN	STL	STL	STL			

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MIL	PIT	PIT	PIT	PIT	BAL	BAL	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
BAL		CIN	CIN	CIN	BOS	BOS	
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28	29	30					
BOS		PHI					

AUGUST

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LAD		WAS	WAS		PHI	PHI	
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PHI		NYM	NYM	NYM	FLA	FLA	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
FLA		SD	SD	SD	PHI	PHI	
30	31						
PHI	FLA						

MAY

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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
HOU	NYM	NYM	FLA	FLA	PHI	PHI
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
PHI	NYM	NYM	NYM		ARI	ARI
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
ARI	COL	COL	COL	COL	TOR	TOR
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
TOR	SF	SF	SF	ARI	ARI	ARI
31						
ARI						

JULY

			1	2	3	4
			PHI	PHI	WAS	WAS
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
WAS	CHI	CHI	CHI	COL	COL	COL
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
COL	ALL STAR GAME ST LOUIS			NYM	NYM	NYM
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
NYM	SF	SF	SF	SF	MIL	MIL
26	27	28	29	30	31	
MIL		FLA	FLA	FLA	LAD	

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

			1	2	3	4	5
			FLA	FLA	FLA	CIN	CIN
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
CIN		HOU	HOU	HOU	STL	STL	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
STL		NYM	NYM	NYM	PHI	PHI	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
PHI	NYM	NYM	NYM		WAS	WAS	
27	28	29	30	1	2	3	
WAS	FLA	FLA	FLA	WAS	WAS	WAS	
4							
WAS							

Away Games ☐ Home Games ☐
*Exhibition Games ☐

2009 Schedule Highlights

JUNE 23RD - 25TH

BRAVES vs. YANKEES



JUNE 26TH - 28TH

BRAVES vs. RED SOX



Online registration for YANKEES and RED SOX tickets is now open

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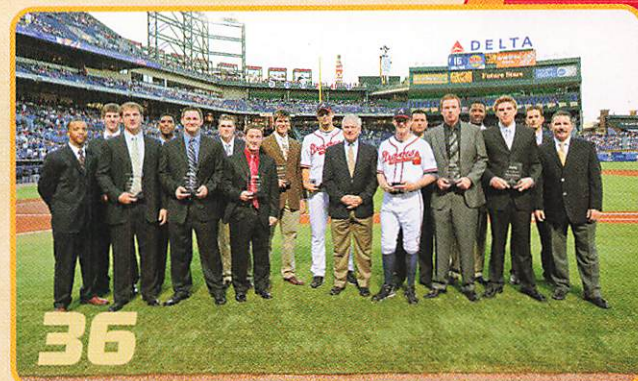
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JOHN CARUSO



PAUL ABEL/ATLANTA BRAVES



ED GARDNER

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Jair Jurrjens:
Paul Abel/Atlanta Braves
Design by Clark Odom



BATTING ORDER

NOVEMBER 2008

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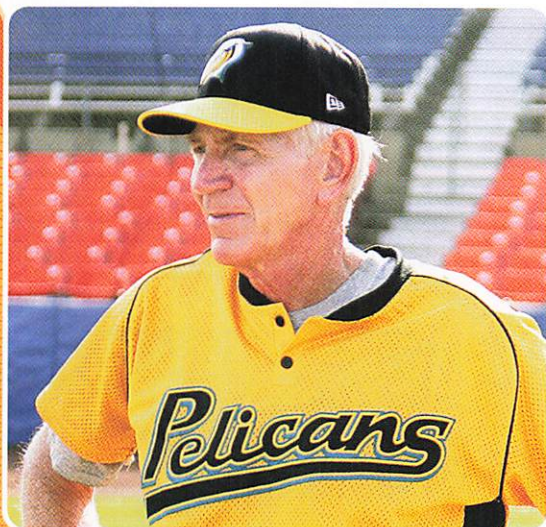
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Mike Gonzalez with (L-R), his mother, Norma, sister Marissa, father Mike, and sister Melina outside the church where they provided shelter during Hurricane Ike and then afterwards sustained a recovery program for the community.

IGLESIA CRISTIANA

BI-LINGUAL SERVICES

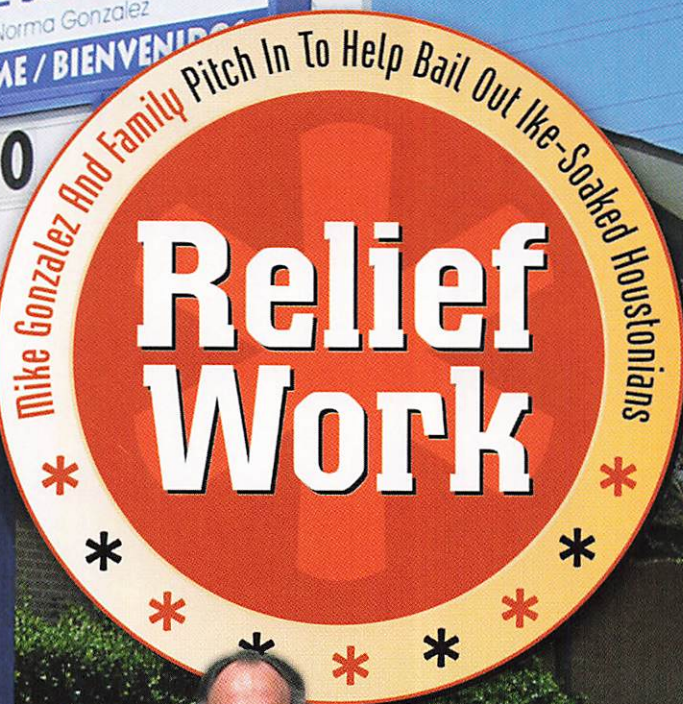
PASTORS: Mike & Norma Gonzalez

EVERYONE WELCOME / BIENVENIDOS

WELCOME TO
THE HOUSE
OF REFUGE

SUNDAY
DOMINGO
9:45 am

WEDNESDAY
MIÉRCOLES
10 pm



WHILE OTHER PLAYERS took off for much-needed R&R after the long baseball season, Mike Gonzalez wanted to keep pitching, though not out of the bullpen.

The Braves' closer looked forward to heading home to Deer Park, Texas, outside Houston, an area still reeling from the impact of Hurricane Ike, the category 2 storm that hit the area on Sept. 12. He wanted to pitch in and help repair his father's church, the House of Refuge, which sustained significant damage to its roofs, as well as water damage inside the sanctuary and education buildings.

Before he could do that, however, Gonzalez needed to have a minor surgical procedure in Atlanta to remove a small mass on his back, near his shoulder. His good intentions were temporarily delayed by medical circumstances when doctors discovered the mass was not on top of the muscle, but under it, complicating the surgery and prolonging Gonzalez's discomfort and recovery.

Nevertheless, he toughed out the 10-hour drive back to Houston, unable to take pain medication since he was traveling alone.

"He got to us on Thursday [four days

after the season ended]," said his father, pastor Mike Gonzalez, adding that the mass was benign. "But he wasn't able to do very much. He said the surgery site felt like he had a weight on his back."

Gonzalez didn't need to worry. As his father said, "There are still a lot of people trying to get things back in order. This area isn't going to recover overnight."

Imagine a hurricane so powerful it is felt 1,419 miles away. That's what it was like for Gonzalez, knowing his family in Texas was enduring the wrath of Hurricane Ike while he was safely tucked into his hotel room at the Grand Hyatt in New York where the Braves were playing the Mets.

Not that the 30-year-old reliever was getting much more rest than his family. His eyes were glued to the television showing scenes of destruction in the areas surrounding Houston as the rains and winds of the deadly storm battered the region. He was fully aware that his father, Mike, mother, Norma, and sisters Melina (27) and Marissa (24), were riding out the storm in the House of Refuge church, not 10 minutes from their Deer Park home. Though the family originally planned to visit Gonzalez that weekend in New York, they remained at

home to help those unable to evacuate.

Miraculously, Gonzalez was able to maintain contact with his family through their ordeal via cell phone.

"I called my family every half hour or so during the night," said Gonzalez. "My parents were staying in my father's church with my sisters and some people from our church. All I knew was what I could see on television."

His father kept Gonzalez updated and reassured him that they were safe.

"He told me I needed to get to sleep, that they would be fine," said Gonzalez.

But it was the wee hours of the morning before he finally settled down to sleep.

Meanwhile, back at the church, Pastor Mike, Norma, Melina, Marissa, and their friends waited out the hurricane.

"The storm hit around 2 a.m.," recalled Pastor Mike. "It was mostly rain at first. Then there was quiet for about 30 minutes, and then the howling wind. It was so loud at times it sounded like a horn. I thought it was never going to stop. We could feel the strength of the storm inside the building."

Earlier in the day, the family prepared

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



The church was designated a distribution center for food and other supplies. Here Gonzalez's sister, Marissa (in turquoise), helps supervise distribution of food.

their house for the storm, boarding up windows and securing belongings. Then they moved to the church where Pastor Mike and several church members placed plywood over all the windows. They left the plate glass doors unobstructed in case someone needed shelter from the storm. The doors provided a window to the outside world during the height of the storm.

Pastor Mike watched trees bending in half, telephone poles swaying, and power lines thrashing in the wind. At one point, the group inside heard screeching and loud thuds on the roof.

"It was so loud, I thought the air-conditioning units had come off and were tumbling across the roof," Pastor Mike said.

Little did they know that the screeching sound was the vinyl siding on the upper level exterior fascia wall being peeled off the insulating boards. The thuds were large pieces of siding being driven directly into the roofing material. Even if they realized what was happening at that point, there was nothing to be done.

Instead, they turned their attention to rain water pouring through exposed portions of the roof, located primarily at spots where additions had been made to the building.

"We were putting buckets all over the place," said Norma. "If we had not stayed at the church, we would have had worse damage."

A child's wading pool was placed under one large leak in the education building.

The storm began to abate around 6 a.m., Sept. 13, and with the light of day, Pastor Mike was able to take in the full impact of damage. Hundreds of black shingles were



Like all of Houston, the community around the House of Refuge was littered with trees and other debris left in Ike's wake.

torn from the roof, and the parking lot was littered with shingles and pieces of vinyl siding.

"The music room, where Melina works with the band and choir, was filled with water," he said. "The carpet was spongy beneath our feet."

As bad as it looked at the church, Pastor Mike was astonished by what he saw in the streets around the House of Refuge.

"My dad said the next day was sunny, but everything was a mess," said Gonzalez. "Everyone started pitching in to clean up the debris."

Trees were downed in yards, on rooftops, in the street.

"It looked like a war zone," Pastor Mike added. "We began cleaning the street gutters so water could flow freely."

And he immediately began mobilizing relief efforts for people in his church and in the community.

While Pastor Mike and the family began the clean up, Gonzalez still had baseball to play, first returning to Atlanta from New York for six days, then traveling to Philadelphia before heading home to Houston for the final series of the season.

"It was a little frustrating being away from my family after they went through all that," he said. "I wanted to be with them, but we all have our part to play."

His mother understood how he felt.

"It seemed incomplete to be apart at that time," said Norma. "[Mike's] so protective of all of us. We stayed in constant contact and let him know what was going on, that we were all okay. It's times like these I know he wishes he could be here."

Pastor Mike said almost half his 350 church members evacuated their homes, and it was a week or more later that some evacuees were able to return. Those who were there chipped in to help in any way needed. One of the church members owned a carpet cleaning business. Using power from a generator, he came the day after the storm to vacuum the water from the carpet.

"We hope we won't need to replace the carpeting," said Pastor Mike.

Of immediate concern was the roof. Large blue tarps, now seen everywhere in Houston, were secured on the flat roof of the sanctuary and on the canted roof of the education building. Pastor Mike climbed a ladder and walked all over the roof, surveying the damage done by the wind. Large gouges, caused by the torn away siding, were found in the flat roofing material that will require resurfacing. Because of significant roof damage to thousands of homes in the Houston area, he initially was unable to purchase shingles for his damaged roofs. Finally, two weeks after the storm, Pastor Mike placed an order for shingles at a store in Corpus Christi, about 200 miles away, and the shingles finally arrived in early October.

"We'll have contractors do the roofing work," he said. "We'll do the rest of the repairs ourselves."

The low estimate for the repairs is \$60,000, though the cost is likely to rise.

The week following the storm, the House of Refuge became a literal place of refuge for up to 60 people who needed a place to stay. Cots were set up in the church's Sunday school classrooms, the church nursery, and spacious children's worship area. It was days before stores began opening. The National Association of Christian Churches (NACC) Disaster Relief contacted Pastor Mike about the House of Refuge becoming a food and supplies distribution



A worker unloads a truck of disaster relief food sent by the National Association of Christian Churches to the House of Refuge.



Mike Gonzalez and his father at an area outside the church where shingles and other debris from the storm are piled up.

center. Many of the families hardest hit by the storm were non-salaried workers who lose money when they're unable to work.

"These people used whatever spare money they had to pay for gas to evacuate, and hotels to stay in," said Pastor Mike. "Once they got home, they didn't have money to spend on even the basics."

The church provided the volunteers. The NACC and the Houston Food Bank supplied the non-perishable food, bottled water and other supplies like diapers and cleaning supplies. Hundreds of cars waited patiently in line for boxes of food.

"Once the stores opened, FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) stopped handing out food," said Pastor Mike.

In the first week, the House of Refuge passed out over 1,500 food boxes.

Power was restored to the church Sept. 20, one week after the storm hit. Church members worked hard to get the sanctuary cleaned for a worship service the next day. Pastor Mike took Philippians 4:7 as his text that day, "And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, shall guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

"Everyone was affected by the storm, whether or not they had damage to their homes," he said. "But it was exciting for our people to serve others in the midst of the storm."

Gonzalez joined his family on Sept. 25, the Braves' off day prior to the weekend series with the Astros. Rather than stay at the team hotel in downtown Houston, he stayed at the family home in Deer Park. It was a relief for him to see his family. He spent as much time with them as possible, having lunch with them at a local cafeteria prior to heading for the ballpark for the

evening game. At the church, he sat at the computer figuring out how many tickets he would need to reserve for the Saturday and Sunday games. On Friday night, 150 House of Refuge church members purchased a block of tickets to the Braves/Astros game to cheer their hometown hero.

Though he had yet to lift a paint brush or clear debris, Gonzalez already provided much needed support just by being there.

"We're all each others' biggest fans," said Marissa. "We cheer each other on."

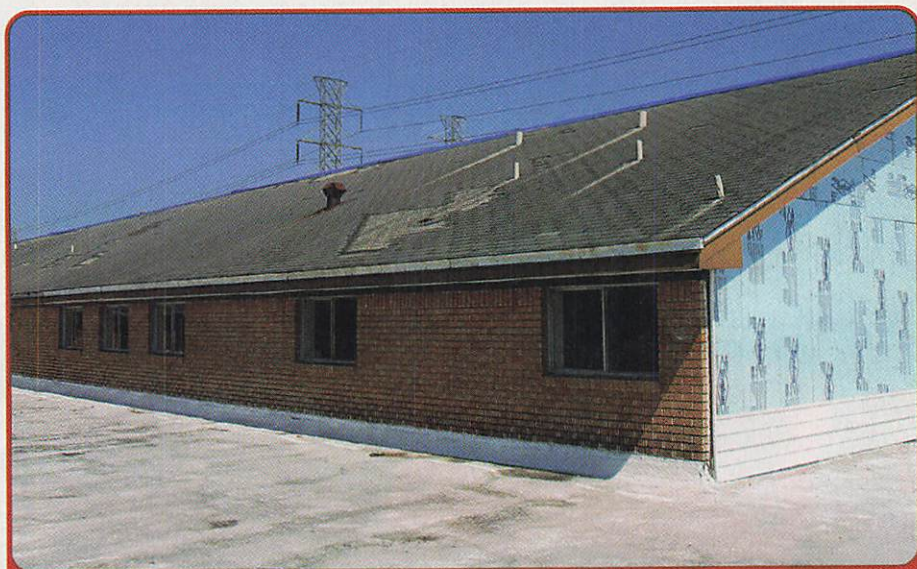
"Michael believes in the ministry we have here," said Pastor Mike. "He's very much involved during the off-season. He gives of himself, and he gives to the people in our church."

In addition to his financial support of the church, Gonzalez often speaks at church functions like the annual mother/son banquet and youth lock-ins. Asked if he would inspect the damage on the roof, Gonzalez smiled and said, "I don't think the Braves want me climbing ladders!"

There was no word on whether or not the church planned any fundraising events to contribute to ongoing relief efforts, but Gonzalez was around the church when the food distribution program started again the week after the season ended.

In spite of his success in baseball, Gonzalez keeps a low profile and a humble perspective that didn't take a hurricane to teach him.

"Baseball could go away at any time," he said, looking gratefully around the table at his family. "But these five people will always pull together."



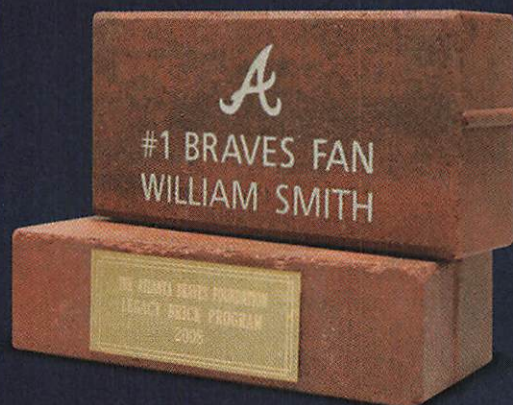
This exterior shot of the House of Refuge shows missing siding (R), as well as patches on the roof where shingles were torn away by the storm.

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THE REASON FOR SO MANY 1-RUN LOSSES

HERE'S A FUN TRIVIA question for you: Whose home run total after the All-Star break would have ranked sixth on the Braves? Give up?

It was me! And you! And Dale Earnhardt Jr., Dr. House, Sarah Palin, and everybody else on earth who hit zero homers for Atlanta. That's because the Braves suffered a full-scale second-half power outage, the kind of breakdown that gets FEMA and the Red Cross involved.

No player on the Braves homered more than five times after the break. Five. And only Brian McCann and Greg Norton even reached that exalted total. How does that even happen?

The second-half flameout was bad, but it wasn't like Atlanta was scorching the bleacher seats before then. For the season, McCann led the team with 23 homers. Twenty-three. That's a stat that belongs in 1982 or something. Next was Chipper with 22. The third-place guy? Mark Teixeira (20), who hasn't worn a Braves uni since July.

Here's the thing - the Braves weren't a poor hitting team overall. Matter of fact, they ranked third in the National League with a .270 average. Having the league's leading hitter in your lineup certainly helps, but Chipper didn't carry the entire load by himself.

The Braves could put the wood on the ball in 2008 - it just didn't go very far when they did.

In a short series, like the playoffs, power droughts are contagious. Just ask the 2008 Cubs or Angels. And any Braves fan older than 12 still shudders at the memories of playoff series where Atlanta hitters would wear out a path between the dugout and home plate. Tell me if this sequence doesn't sound familiar: Batter 1, ground out. Batter 2, strike out. Batter 3, full-count walk, giving fans a spark of hope. Batter 4, strike out.

Gary Sheffield, who's one homer from 500 for his career, went 3-for-30 (.100) during his two Braves post-seasons. And more than one familiar name has struggled to get over the Mendoza line in critical October series.

But over the course of a season, statistics tend to even out. And 2008's power numbers told a sadder story than Old Yeller. As



PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

Greg Norton (L) and Brian McCann were the only two Braves to hit as many as 5 home runs after the All-Star break.

2008 wore on, McCann wore down, as would be expected of a catcher who plays in almost every game and starts 132 in a season.

The outfield had about as much power as Celine Dion singing AC/DC. Atlanta's outfielders hit just 27 homers all season. (Barry Bonds used to hit that many in a weekend series.) That ranked last in the majors. For comparison's sake, the Braves were within 20 outfield homers of only one other National League team.

Certainly, Jeff Francoeur's offensive troubles contributed to that woeful total. He hit only 11 homers, barely a third of his 2006 total of 29. And the rest of the outfield was made up of a rotating cast of line drive hitters and rookies, decent enough at putting the ball in play, but not at putting it over a fence.

Also, Atlanta didn't re-sign Andruw Jones, who, believe it or not, is still just three years removed from his franchise-record 51 homers in 2005. Then again, Jones played so poorly in Los Angeles this year (.158 with 3 home runs and 14 RBIs in 75 games, if you didn't keep track), that he wouldn't have helped.

Homers aren't the sole barometer of success. The Dodgers, who at this writing have all the momentum in the National League playoffs, only hit seven more homers for the season than Atlanta. But you've also got to consider the makeup of the Braves. In the good ol' days, Atlanta could get by with only scoring a couple of runs a game, because the pitching staff could shut down pretty much anyone else.

This isn't 1998. Decimated by injuries, the Braves' pitching staff came back to the pack, ranking 12th in the National League in ERA. A team can't expect to scratch-and-claw its way to many wins when the pitching staff is surrendering more than four runs a game. Every so often, a bases-clearing moon shot is helpful, otherwise loss after narrow loss can mount.

Want a key reason for Atlanta's atrocious year-long stretch of one-run losses (11-30)? The lack of power is it. The Braves failed to hit a home run in 76 games - 47 percent of the schedule. This from a franchise often associated with home run hitters, from Hank Aaron to Dave Johnson, who somehow managed to hit 43 in his first year as a Brave (1973) in spite of hitting just 93 total in his other 12 seasons in the majors.

Question is, what are the chances for a quick turnaround? Hopefully, Francoeur will regain his stroke, but McCann and Chipper are unlikely to see huge surges, and nobody else on the team as it's currently constituted is a serious power threat.

Which means Atlanta needs to pursue a power-hitting outfielder, reportedly already at the top of GM Frank Wren's wish list.

That, or the team could pull in the fences. Don't try running that one by the pitchers, though.

PITCHING LAUGHS

COMEDIAN JEFF FOXWORTHY is changing his supporting cast from fifth-graders to Braves players. That ought to work well, since there are a lot of similarities between grade school humor and clubhouse humor.

Foxworthy, host of the hit Fox network game show "Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader," and his long-time friend John Smoltz are joining for giggles and gags Sunday evening, Nov. 9, at 7 o'clock for what should be an entertaining evening at the Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre at Encore Park in the Atlanta suburb of Alpharetta. Proceeds will benefit the charitable John Smoltz Foundation.

"The audience can expect lots of great entertainment, music and laughs," said Smoltz describing the event billed as "An Evening with John Smoltz, Jeff Foxworthy & Friends."

What friends?

"Maybe some of my teammates will show up," Smoltz said, coyly. "Jeff Francoeur, Brian McCann, Tom Glavine... We'll see."

Ernie Johnson Jr. of TBS Sports, quite a quipster himself, will be the emcee, and country/rock vocalist Angela Wolff is scheduled as the warmup act.

Smoltz says Foxworthy will be the star of the night though.

"It's really Jeff's gig. I'm just along for the ride," said Smoltz. "He's really funny. He makes me laugh, especially his impromptu, in-the-moment humor. This is the first major fundraiser for the John Smoltz Foundation, and I



ANSA/SHOOTING/ASIS

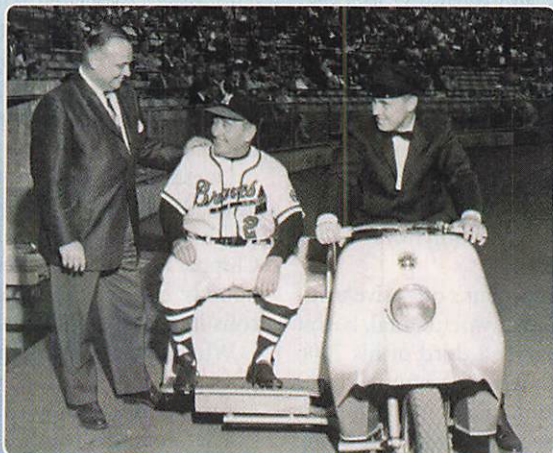
don't think we could have a better event to kick it off."

Organizations supported by the foundation include the Atlanta Community Food Bank, King's Ridge Christian School, and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.

Tickets range from \$30 to \$99 and are available online at Ticketmaster.com. Visit johnsmoltz.org for more information.

- PATTY RASMUSSEN

EASY RIDER



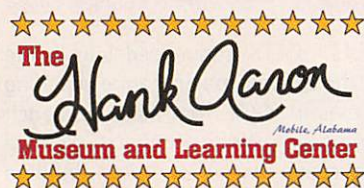
SPECIAL

THE BRAVES have made a lot of history through the years as the oldest continuously operating sports franchise in America that dates to 1871. Hank Aaron broke Babe Ruth's career home run record... more recently, the team won a record 14 consecutive division titles... then there was a moment a little less prominent in the history books.

On June 23, 1958, at Milwaukee County Stadium, Braves reliever Don McMahon became the first major league pitcher to ride from the bullpen to his assignment on the mound. He was delivered via motorcycle sidecar, beginning a trend that continued in the 1960s and '70s when many teams used a golf cart to transport relievers.

Thanks to the Harley Davidson archives, here's a picture of former Braves manager Fred Haney taking a test ride in that very sidecar.

HANK'S HOME



HANK AARON'S childhood home was scheduled to be in its new location Oct. 24, and a luncheon and groundbreaking to celebrate this significant step in establishing the Hank Aaron Museum and Learning Center was scheduled Oct. 30.

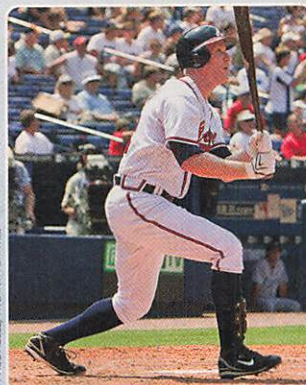
The home is being relocated to Hank Aaron Stadium in his hometown of Mobile, Ala., where it will be a permanent exhibit that will include artifacts from his career, including some loaned from the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Plans call for the facility to open in March as part of the celebration of Aaron's 75th birthday (Feb. 5). Though the Oct. 30 luncheon was not open to the public, according to museum curator Mike Callahan, a dinner to honor Aaron is scheduled in Mobile Feb. 12, and tickets will be sold to the public. Details have yet to be announced.

Information about the museum and programs is available at hankaaronstadium.com. The Mobile BayBears, who play in the stadium, are selling 4" x 8" bricks with personalized inscriptions through their charitable arm to pave a walkway leading to the Aaron museum. Bricks are \$250 each, and information is available at the web site or by calling (251) 479-BEAR (2327).

HOW DO THEY DO THAT?

RECALL FARM PLAYERS



Josh Anderson is one of many players the Braves summoned from the minors in 2008.

counterbalance any move - usually by optioning another player to the minors or placing somebody on the disabled list - so the team stays at the 25-man active roster limit.

"There is a special MLB system that we enter all of our roster moves into," said Stone, assistant to both John Schuerholz and Wren. "Every day, they [Major League Baseball] have the ability to go in and see all the moves that we've put in. And they have to approve them. So, if we've done something incorrectly, we're going to get a phone call."

MLB puts out a daily transaction bulletin that goes to all 30 clubs. If a move gets entered into the computer system before 5 pm, and MLB approves it that same day, it will appear on that day's bulletin.

Stone also deals with payroll issues associated with transactions, since many players get different rates of pay for time in the major leagues versus time in the minors. If the minor leaguer is not on the Braves' 40-man roster, the club needs to develop a Major League contract for him.

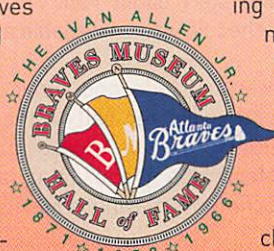
"Before the player ever steps foot on the field to play his first game when we call him up, he has to have that contract signed, and we have to send a copy to Major League Baseball," said Stone.

The Braves must also make urgent travel arrangements for the minor leaguer. While most players get recalled from Triple-A Richmond (Gwinnett in the future) or Double-A Mississippi, there's a 50-50 chance they're playing on the road and could be as far away as Indianapolis or Pawtucket, R.I.

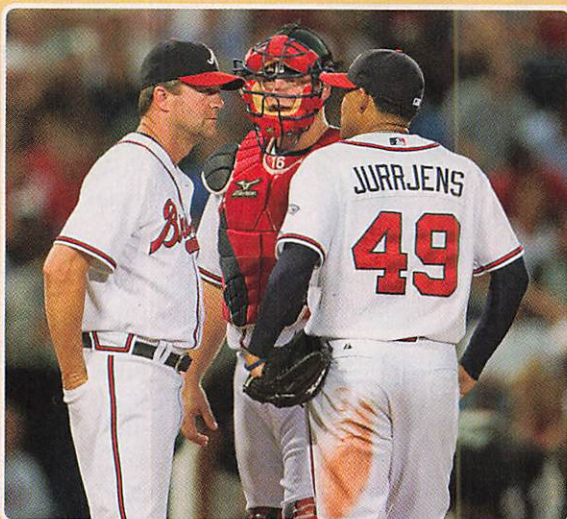
- STEVE FALL

FREEBIE!

ON SATURDAY, Nov. 15, the Braves Museum and Hall of Fame at Turner Field will offer free admission during normal hours from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Additionally, tours of the stadium, normally \$12 for adults, \$7 for children, and \$10 for groups of 20 or more, will also be free on Nov. 15. Tours leave on the hour Monday-Saturday at 10 a.m., with the last tour leav-



ing at 2 p.m. The Braves Museum is planning monthly promotions throughout the off-season. During "Toy For a Tour" from Dec. 1-22, children 13 and under who bring a new, unwrapped toy will receive free admission to the Braves Museum and a complimentary tour of Turner Field. The Atlanta Braves Foundation will donate the toys to children's charities.



PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

FAMILIAR FACES

FRANK WREN AND BOBBY COX announced late in the season that all six members of the Braves' major league coaching staff will return in the same roles in 2009. That includes bench coach **Chino Cadahia**, first base coach **Glenn Hubbard**, pitching coach **Roger McDowell**, hitting coach **Terry Pendleton**, bullpen coach **Eddie Perez** and third base coach **Brian Snitker**.

Hubbard has been on Cox's staff 10 years. Pendleton completed his seventh season, and McDowell finished his third season with the Braves. Cadahia, Perez and Snitker each wrapped up their second season on Cox's staff, though Snitker also was on the major league staff in 1985 and again from 1988-90.

Pitching coach Roger McDowell (L) and the other five members of Bobby Cox's staff will return next season.

CHIPPER'S PAIN

The Braves announced Oct. 1 that an MRI on the right shoulder that caused **Chipper Jones** to miss the last eight starts of the season revealed the pain was caused by acute tendinitis. The overall structure of the shoulder looked normal for a player of Jones' experience, according to a news release. Braves lead orthopedist Dr. **Xavier Duralde** prescribed therapy, followed by a strength program. In spite of not being able to throw the ball across the infield, Chipper made six pinch-hit appearances from Sept. 21-28 and got two hits in three official at-bats and drew three walks. On Sept. 24, he hit his second career pinch-homer, a three run shot against Philadelphia in the sixth inning.

KELLY'S STREAK

Kelly Johnson had a 22-game hitting streak Sept. 1-24 that's tied for sixth in Atlanta history with **Hank Aaron** (1971), **Felipe Alou** (1968) and **Ralph Garr** (1971). It also was the longest in the NL for the season. During the streak, he hit .402 (35-for-87) with three home runs. He had 10 multi-hit games, 15 extra-base hits and 18 RBIs, a .435 on-base percentage and a .678 slugging percentage. He had his third career two-home-run game Sept. 10.

BETTER LATE THAN...

Matt Diaz finally was cleared to resume playing Sept. 24, and the Braves activated him from the 60-day disabled list with four games remaining in the season. The only game he appeared in was the season finale, Sept. 28 at Houston, when he went 0-for-3.

When Diaz tore the posterior cruciate ligament in his left knee on May 27, he hoped to return right after the All-Star break. Though the ligament healed, he couldn't play because he'd lost too much strength in the knee due to inactivity.

SHORT HOPS

Major League Baseball announced that spring training camps will open almost a week earlier in 2009, due to the World Baseball Classic (Mar. 5-23). Players can report as early as Feb. 14. Games will start about Feb. 25. The Braves' schedule was unavailable at press time.

Martin Prado and **Omar Infante** are playing winter ball in the Caribbean. **Eddie Perez** is managing the club in Maracaibo (Venezuela), and **Jordan Schafer** is playing in Mexico.

Ruben Gotay, **Corky Miller** and **Vladimir Nunez** were sent outright to Triple-A

Gwinnett of the International League Oct. 6.

By winning 97 games, the Tampa Bay Rays broke the Braves' 1991 record for most wins (94) in a season after finishing last.

The Yankees failed to make the post-season, ending their streak of 13 straight playoff appearances (1995-2007). That's one shy of the Braves' record of 14 set from 1991-2005 (there were no playoffs in 1994). No other team has made the post-season more than five straight years.

Yunel Escobar could not start the last two weeks due to a strained hamstring.

Martin Prado started in left field on Sept. 17 against Philadelphia. It was the fifth position he's started a game at this year. **Omar Infante** also started games at five different positions.

The Braves lost all nine games against the Phillies at Turner Field. The last time the franchise lost a season series of nine or more games to one team was in 1909, when the Boston Doves, as the Braves were known at the time, were 0-11



against the Cubs. The last team to dominate the Braves as handily as the Phillies did in '08 was in 1975 when the Reds, who won the World Series that year, were 8-0 at what then was called Atlanta Stadium.

- A** The jersey **John Smoltz** wore when he recorded his 3,000th career strikeout is one of several items the National Baseball Hall of Fame put on display from the 2008 season. It is part of an exhibit entitled "Today's Game."
- A** In spite of winning just 72 games, the Braves still have the best record in baseball from 1991-2008. They are 1,666-1,182 (.585) over the last 18 seasons. The next best record belongs to the Yankees, who are 1,646-1,198. Next closest in the NL are the Cardinals with a record of 1,510-1,337.
- A** **Will Ohman** appeared in 83 games, one shy of the franchise record 84 by **Chris Reitsma** in 2004, and second in the majors in '08.
- A** Braves pinch-hitters batted .265, best in the NL by a wide margin.
- A** **Brian McCann** has 65 home runs since the start of the 2006 season to lead all big league catchers in that period. He's only the third catcher in history to have two seasons of 20 or more home runs before age 25. The other two are Hall of Famers **Johnny Bench** and **Gary Carter**.
- A** In 13 relief appearances of two or more innings, **Buddy Carlyle** had an 0.81 ERA and limited hitters to a .175 batting average.
- A** **Jorge Julio** made 12 appearances for the Braves. He gave up a run in his first outing but got the win, then reeled off 11 straight scoreless appearances.
- A** When **Josh Anderson** led off the Sept. 2 game at Florida with a home run, he became the first Brave since **Albert Hall** in 1984 to have his first career home run lead off a game.
- A** **Jeff Francoeur** batted .286 in September, his highest monthly average of the season.
- A** **Casey Kotchman** struck out just 39 times in a combined 573 plate appearances with the Braves and Angels in 2008.

WE HAVE OUR STRATEGY FOR WHAT WE PLAN TO DO

WE COMPLETED our organizational meetings in Orlando last week with our major league scouts, and Bobby Cox and (assistant general manager) Bruce Manno. Coming out of those, we have a strategic plan for the off-season.

That plan includes a list with all free agent pitchers and potential starting pitchers who might be available for trade, ranked in priority of how they would fit on our club. And, of course, we did that position by position, as well. I can't talk about specific players, because that would be tampering, but you can be sure that all of the big names that are about to become free agents are on our list.

We were in Orlando for four days, and we saw four days of our Instructional League games. We met in the morning, watched a game, came back to meet in the afternoon, then went to dinner and got together back at the hotel to watch playoff games on TV. We were totally immersed in baseball and discussing our industry for all four days.

The organizational meetings are one of our most important meetings of the year. We had 14 people there - Roger (McDowell), Bobby, John Coppolella (director of baseball administration), our major league scouts, Bruce and myself.

We're talking to other clubs on a daily basis. It appears everyone is very prepared for the off-season and that talks could heat up pretty quickly. We'll be going to the World Series at the American League city to continue discussions, and come back after that and head to the General Managers Meetings (Dana Point, Calif., Nov. 3-6). Bruce and John and (special assistant to the GM/major league scout) Jim Fregosi will attend those meetings with me. Things really are moving very fast now.

We've expressed interest to Mike Hampton that we'd like to have him back, and he and his representative are trying to decide what they want to do. They've been very receptive to talking to us and are appreciative of the time he spent with us, and particularly the difficult times the last three years.

Hopefully, when the time comes, we'll work it out. As he pitched and got stronger last year, he pitched more and more like Mike Hampton is capable of pitching. We were encouraged by what we saw.

Jorge Julio is another pitcher who is a free agent and was a pleasant surprise late last season. He'd had some success in the majors but had some struggles. He came to us, and Guy Hansen (Richmond pitching coach) made some mechanical changes that he was able to carry into games at Richmond in August with a high level of success. Once we brought him up, he did the same against major league hitters and was a pleasant surprise.

All of our players are doing well physically, as far as I know, in recovering from their injuries and in rehabilitating from surgeries. Yunel (Escobar) is fine (hamstring and shoulder). He just needed a month's rest. He wasn't going to get better if he kept playing. It was the same with Chipper (tendinitis in right shoulder).

The first month after the season is healing time, when the players get over the grind of the season. Then they start their off-season (strength and conditioning) programs.

I don't know if the programs our players are on this off-season are significantly different under our new strength and conditioning coach, Phil Falco, but the monitoring and coordination are different.

Phil has done a tremendous job of communicating with the players before they left about their strengths and weaknesses and the conditioning and strength expectations for each of them coming into spring training. They all received a written evaluation of their needs for the off-season.

IT APPEARS EVERYONE IS VERY PREPARED FOR THE OFF-SEASON AND THAT TALKS COULD HEAT UP PRETTY QUICKLY.

THE YANKS ARE COMING



FOR THE FIRST TIME since 2000, the Yankees are coming to Turner Field for a series against the Braves in 2009. The mid-week series (June 23-25) against the Bronx Bombers is one of many highlights to the schedule for next season, the full version of which is displayed in calendar form on pages 48-49 of this issue.

The Braves will play nine straight games against American League East powerhouses Boston and the Yankees in late June. Atlanta plays three games at Boston June 19-21, then comes home for the three-game series against New York followed by three more against the Red Sox June 26-28.

For the fifth straight year, the Braves open the schedule on the road. The season opener is Monday, April 6 at NL champion Philadelphia. The home opener at Turner Field is Friday, April 10, against Washington.

Besides six games against Boston and three with the Yankees, the Braves' other interleague matchups are: Toronto, managed by former Brave **Cito Gaston**, at Turner Field May 22-24; and Atlanta at Baltimore June 12-14.

Bobby Cox's club closes the season at Turner Field Oct. 1-4 against the Nationals.

The Braves unveiled the first section of Legacy Bricks in Monument Grove. The bricks, which benefit the charitable Atlanta Braves Foundation, can be purchased for prices ranging from \$150 to \$325 at braves.com/bricks or by calling 1-877-223-2749.

GOOD DEEDS

The Atlanta Braves Foundation awarded grants totaling \$87,000 to the following non-profit organizations prior to the Sept. 19 game: Atlanta Community Food Bank, Atlanta Habitat for Humanity, Atlanta Track Club, Canine Companions for Independence, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Cobb Christmas, Inc., East Lake Foundation, Latin American Association, L.E.A.D., Inc., Metro Atlanta Project, Muscular Dystrophy Association, Ga., North Metro Miracle League, READING Paws, Inc., Star Struck Foundation, The Auditory-Verbal Center, Inc., The Ron Clark Academy, Tomorrow's Champions, Villages at Carver Family YMCA, YES! Atlanta.

Foundation fundraising efforts in 2008 included the Legacy Brick Paver Program, Atlanta Braves Foundation Weekend, and the Third Annual Atlanta Braves Foundation Golf Classic. Annual fundraisers and ongoing programs including Jerseys Off Our Backs, Brown Bag Bonanza, the 50/50 Raffle and game day silent auctions helped provide additional

funds to support the Atlanta Braves Foundation's outreach efforts.

Metro Atlanta youth baseball and softball programs benefited in 2008 from the "Pinch Hitter Grant Fund," an initiative to assist youth baseball and softball organizations in need. The Atlanta Braves Foundation made \$12,000 in financial contributions to 12 organizations to help provide relief for lost or stolen equipment, damaged facilities, and uniform shortages.

AUTOGRAPH SHOW

Kelly Johnson, Chris Chambliss, who was a member of the 1982 division-winning Braves and now serves as the organization's Triple-A hitting coach, and top prospect **Jason Heyward** are among confirmed autographed guests for the BP Sports Collectibles Show Nov. 14-16 at the Cobb County Civic Center in the Atlanta suburb of Marietta.

Chambliss is scheduled to sign on Saturday, Nov. 15, and Johnson and Heyward

are scheduled to sign on Sunday, Nov. 16.

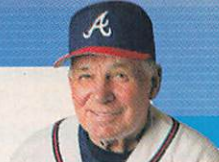
Sessions are 3-9 p.m. on Nov. 14, and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. on Nov. 15 and 16. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$2 for ages 7-15, and kids 6-under are free. There's no charge for parking.

Numerous other autograph guests are scheduled. Dealers will have exhibits, and there will be contests and door prizes. For autograph prices and other details, visit bpsports.com or call (678) 355-9990.

CHARITY LINEUP

Marquis Grissom gala/golf tournament. The Get in the Game semi-formal is Nov. 2 at Turner Field's 755 Club with live entertainment and silent auction, and the Marquis Grissom Baseball Association Golf Tournament is Nov. 3 at Durham Lake Golf Club in Fairburn, Ga. For information, visit MGBA.org or call (770) 745-1244.

Chipper Jones



Celebrity Golf Tournament is scheduled at Bears Best Atlanta Golf Course in Suwanee, Ga. For information, call **Stacy Turner** at (386) 822-8000.

Thursday, Nov. 6: The 12th Annual **Phil Niekro** Golf Classic is scheduled at Chateau Elan Resort in Braselton, Ga. The cost is \$200 per team or \$800 per player, with proceeds benefiting the Edmondson-Telford Center for Children (etcenterforchildren.org). For information, contact **Jane Carpenter** at (770) 287-2693 or cjcarpenter@bell-south.net.

Saturday, Nov. 8: The Celebration of Wishes Gala benefiting the Make A Wish Foundation of Georgia and Alabama will be hosted by **Tim and Kim Hudson**. It will be held at the Grand Hyatt in Buckhead. Tickets cost \$250 a person. For more information or to purchase a table, contact **Kari Love** at kllove@ga-al.wish.org.

Saturday, Nov. 8: The Fairway Affair Gala to benefit Jaden's Ladder hosted by former Brave **Andrew Jones** and his wife, **Nicole**. The gala will be held at a private residence in Buckhead and includes cocktails, dinner and entertainment provided by R&B artist **Johnny Gill**. Tickets are \$300 a person. For ticket information, contact Jaden's Ladder at 1-877-430-1118.

Thursday, Nov. 13: **Brian and Ashley McCann** are the Honorary Chairs of the Rally Foundation Benefit Bash at the Atlanta History Center. Tickets are \$125 a person, and the evening includes cocktails, dining, an extensive silent auction and live auction. For more information, contact the Rally Foundation at (404) 847-1270 or beneftbash@rallyfoundation.org.

THE SPAHNIE

CC Sabathia won his second straight **Warren Spahn** Award, presented to the best lefthander in baseball by the Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame Museum. The winner is determined by a formula that ranks southpaws based on wins, strikeouts and ERA. Sabathia, who split the season between Cleveland and Milwaukee finished first in strikeouts, tied for second in wins, and third in ERA to finish with six points.

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE SMOLTZ AND GLAVINE

I WANT TO THANK OUR GREAT FANS, those who came to the ballpark, watched on TV, and you ChopTalk readers for all your support this season. It was a tough season for all of us, and we really appreciate you sticking by our team.

We had a lot of tough breaks, what with all the injuries, but I've always said our fans are some of the most loyal in baseball. We appreciate all of you and look forward to getting out there in 2009 and giving you something to cheer about.

The season was tough. From the start, I've said that Frank Wren and his staff did a great job of putting our team together, and I stand by that. When we were hit with so many injuries, they went out and found guys, like Jorge Campillo, to fill the gaps.

Frank has already stated that the primary focus of our off-season will be improving our pitching staff, mainly the starting rotation. Maybe we'll have John Smoltz and Tom Glavine back, but we have to move forward and make decisions as though they won't be with us.

I wouldn't underestimate either of those guys in coming back. They won't know until later in the winter, probably December at the earliest, but both are great competitors. If they still want to pitch, they'll do everything in their power to get back.

Mike Hampton will be a free agent. I know they've talked to him, and would like to re-sign him. Hampton pitched great in his last start against the Astros. His stuff is good enough to win 15 games next year, hopefully for us. He's got a young arm, and I can't really say any more about it. It took some time, but he made a great comeback.

As for other free agents and trades, it's a little too early to tell what could happen. I know Frank wants to shore up the pitching staff, and that's what you have to do to win ballgames and win championships.

We have young guys coming on. Braves fans got to see James Parr, Charlie Morton and Jo-Jo Reyes. But those guys are still maturing. They came up and did some good work, but they're still developing confidence in their stuff. Everybody goes through that period, even Smoltz and Glavine had to develop their pitches and their confidence. But they'll get there.

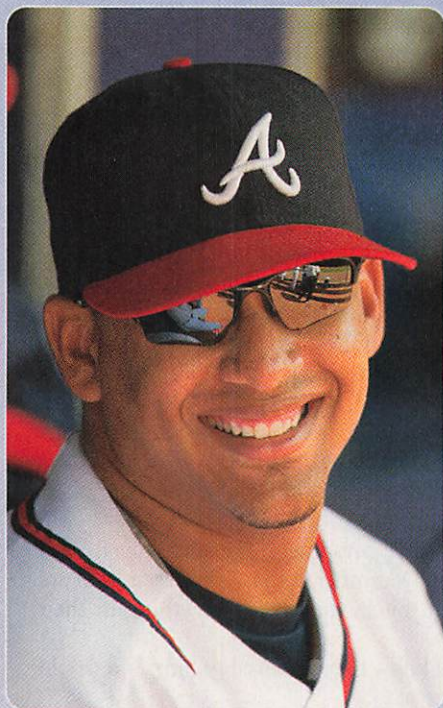
We worked our bullpen hard this year and saw some surprising performances. Will Ohman was a horse. So was Blaine Boyer. Both guys came out of the bullpen whenever we called them. Mike Gonzalez came back strong after his Tommy John surgery, pretty quickly, too, and pitched well. He'll only get better for next season. We expect to get Peter Moylan back by as early as late April. He and Rafael Soriano are ahead of the curve in their rehab.

I know Frank would love to find a good stick in the lineup to hit in back of Chipper Jones. We'll see what happens with that, but our lineup hit well. Casey Kotchman began hitting later in the season, and we feel he's going to have a great season defensively next year. Our infield looks good. Kelly Johnson was terrific during September, as locked in as Chipper was at the beginning of the season.

Chipper had a great year and was a ton of fun to watch. He was locked in from the get-go.

I think we're going to see a lot of competition for the center field and left field spots in spring training, and that's actually a lot of fun. We'll have to wade through all the possibilities and see who makes the best showing.

I THINK WE'RE GOING TO SEE A LOT OF COMPETITION FOR THE CENTER FIELD AND LEFT FIELD SPOTS IN SPRING TRAINING.



PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

INTERVIEW BY
PATTY RASMUSSEN

Q: What's life like in Curacao, where you're from?

A: It's not a big island, so it's like everyone knows you and they recognize you easily. Growing up there was really fun. When I'm home (in the off-season), I mostly hang out with my family and my friends, the guys who play pro ball. When you're home, you want to see "your boys." It's been six months since you've been able to hang out, so we go to the clubs. We have fun, but we're safe, too. Sometimes, we'll just go to a club and sit around and talk. It's good to make jokes and talk - like a boys' night out.

Q: When you go to the clubs, do you dance? If so, are you a good dancer?

A: Yes, I definitely dance, and I am a good dancer! We do the salsa type dancing.

Q: You pitched more innings this season than any time previously. How do you feel physically, and how was your transition to the Braves after being traded here from Detroit last October?

In his rookie season, Jurrjens led the Braves in wins (13), starts (31), innings (188 1/3), and strikeouts (139).

A: When I was getting to my career high in innings (previously 143 1/3 in 2007), I was getting a little nervous, because I didn't know what was going to happen when I got there - whether I'd feel pain in my shoulder and get sore. I worked really hard last off-season with Lloyd Van Pamelin and the training staff with exercises that would strengthen my shoulder. Thanks to guys like Tim Hudson and John Smoltz and veteran guys, they made it easy for me to feel like a part of the team right away at spring training. They helped me be part of the team, be part of the family. If it wasn't for them, the transition would have been a little slower and a little rougher. The veteran guys accepted me into the Braves. It was fun. I accomplished goals I had and still have more to go. I really came here to try to help the team make it to the playoffs, and that's still something I want to do.

Q: What was the highlight of your season?

A: For me, honestly, it was staying healthy. That was something that I was really trying hard to do this year. The last couple of years, I've missed starts due to injuries, and I didn't take care of myself like I did this

year. I missed a start (in Chicago), but I missed it because I hurt my ankle. It was stupid and had nothing to do with baseball (slipped on stairs at Wrigley Field). I didn't feel anything bad in my arm this year, other than normal soreness after a game. I worked between my starts really hard, doing my exercises, getting massage. I've felt really good all year, and I think that's what's made me happiest this year.

My goal for next year is throwing 200 innings, for sure (worked 188 1/3 in '08), and trying to get 200 strikeouts (139 in '08), even though I know that's really difficult. It's a tough goal, but it's something that makes me work hard in the off-season and during the season.

I want to just try to help our team make it to the playoffs. That's the thing I'm missing, to accomplish my dad's dream. I'm playing for his favorite team, in the big leagues, and just want to get to the playoffs and get a ring.

Q: What's the first thing that comes to your mind to these questions: Who's the best-dressed guy on the team?

A: Mike Gonzalez.

Q: Who's the funniest guy on the team?

A: Martin Prado.

Q: Who's most serious?

A: Chipper Jones.

Q: What's the craziest thing you've seen one of your teammates do that you can tell me about?

A: I think I'd better not answer that one.

Q: What's the most recent song you added to your iPod?

WHEN I GO BACK HOME, I NEED TO MAKE SURE I'M A GOOD EXAMPLE... THERE ARE A LOT OF KIDS LOOKING UP TO ME.

A: "Out Here Grinding" by DJ Khaled.

Q: You got auctioned off for the Make-A-Wish Foundation by Jezebel Magazine as one of the most-eligible bachelors in Atlanta. Do you know how much money you were "bought" for, and did you go on a date with the winner?

A: No, no date! A girl won the auction and came to the stadium. We met before a game and took some pictures. That was it. She told me that she bid on me because no one was bidding for me and she felt pity! I said, "Thank you, I appreciate that!" I was a pity

Frank Wren presents Jurrjens with the National League Rookie of the Month Award for June.

auction! I don't know how much she paid.

Q: You're not going home to Curacao until late November. What's the first thing you'll do when you get home?

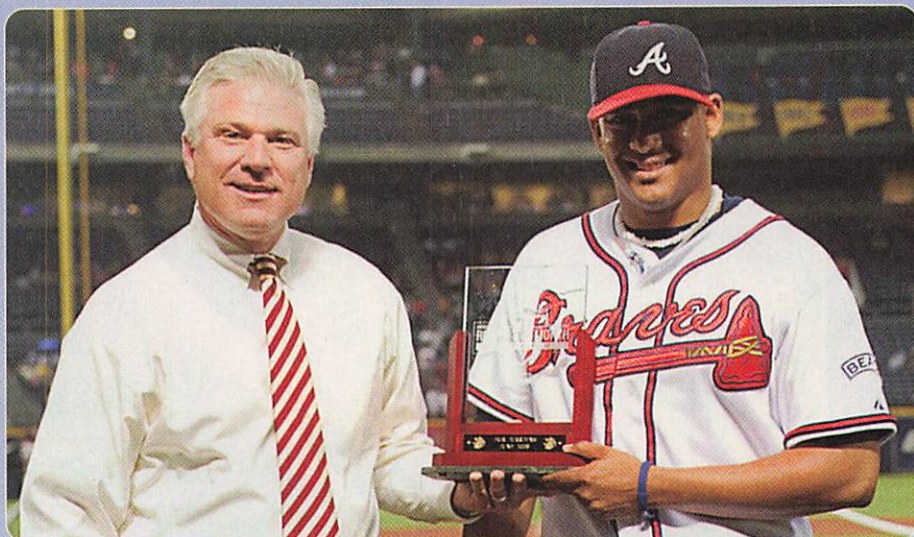
A: I really do just spend a lot of time with my family. When I get home, I'll give my family the gifts I've brought them and eat my mom's cooking. She's a great cook. My favorite thing that she makes is a meat and vegetable soup. I don't know everything that's in it, but it's the best soup I've ever had. Every time I go home, I ask her to make it.

Q: You got to visit the Little League World Series when Curacao was competing [CT, Oct. '08]. What's it like to have an entire island nation of Little Leaguers looking up to you?

A: It's an honor and pressure, too. When I go back home, I need to make sure I'm a good example. We're all human, and we all make mistakes. But I don't want any kids seeing me do something they shouldn't do. There are a lot of kids looking up to me, and I want to be a good example.

Q: Did you get to say anything to the Little Leaguers when you were at the World Series?

A: I got there about five minutes before the



PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

game. I got to throw out the first pitch, and it was awesome when they said my name. The kids' families were standing up and cheering and waving my flag [Curacao], and it was the best feeling ever. I didn't really talk too much to the kids about baseball. I told them to have fun and enjoy it, because it was a big stage. Every time I see them play, I get emotional, because I come from a small island, and when the kids play, the whole world is watching. I never had the chance to play at the Little League World Series.

Q: What's the most extravagant present you ever bought yourself?

A: The car I bought this year is the best. I got a GMC Yukon with all the things, a DVD player. When the family comes to visit, it's great. I drive it here in the U.S. When I'm at home, I usually drive a car from the dealership down there. Or sometimes I drive the car I gave my dad when I signed, a Lexus.

Q: You and Ruben Gotay became best friends. Did you know him before this season?

A: No. The thing was I didn't have a place to live. Ruben didn't have a place to live. I was talking to Yunel Escobar, and he told me about a place [in Buckhead], and I went to check it out. I called Ruben and told him about it. We both moved in. I didn't have a car, and he was living two doors from me. I would ride to the stadium and back with him, and we began to hang out. We were new guys on

the team. Everyone here knew everyone. Omar Infante had come from Detroit, too, but he knew Martin Prado and Gregor Blanco from playing in Venezuela. So, Ruben and I just clicked. We became best friends.

Q: It sounds more like brothers.

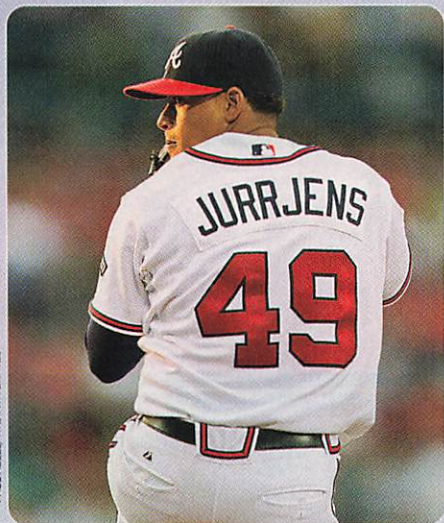
A: Yeah, definitely. He's got my back. I've got his. You don't always see this in pro ball. There can be a lot of jealousy. When my family is here and they cook, I call him to come and eat, and he does the same with me when his family is in Atlanta [from Puerto Rico]. We go out to the mall, and if you see him, you'll see me. If I'm not there, I'll be there in a few seconds. It's really a great friendship, and you don't find people like that all the time. The sad part about baseball is that you meet friends wherever you go, but sometimes you have to say goodbye when they move on or you do. When someone goes to another team, you lose contact, because you're busy, they're busy, and you're not living near each other.

Q: You're not the same age, right?

A: No, he's older than me. I'm 22, and he's 25.

Q: Does he ever lord that over you, that you're younger than he is?

A: I always tell him that even though I'm younger, he looks up to me - because he's a midget [listed at 5-11 to Jurrjens' 6-1]!



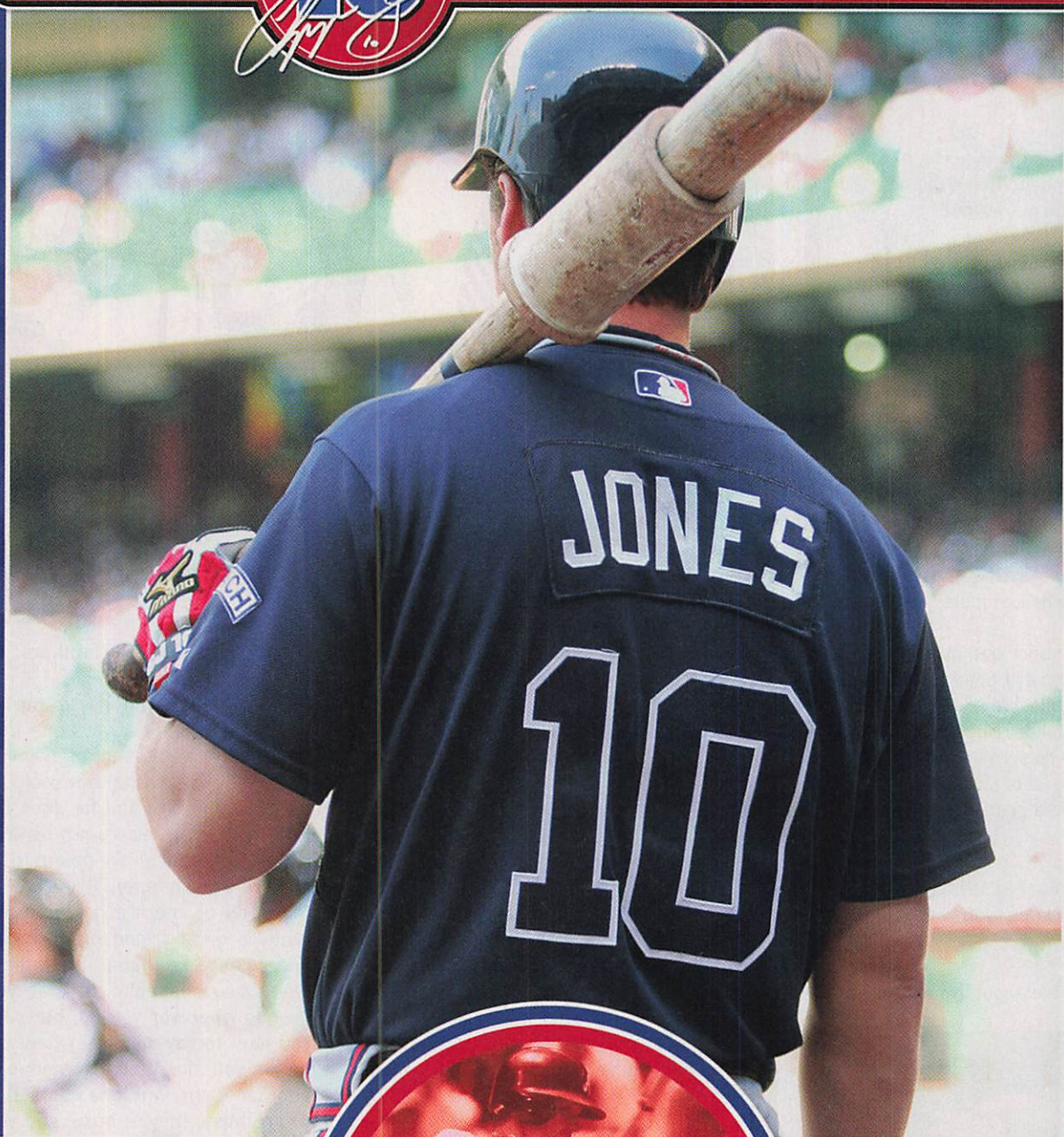
PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

CHIPPER

#10

THROUGH THE YEARS

LAST IN A SERIES



CARLOS RESTREPO

THE CHAMP!

Jones' .364 Average Leads Majors, Breaks 115-Year-Old NL Record For Switch-Hitters

CHIPPER JONES lost the 2007 National League batting title on the last day of the season, but that shortfall only made him smarter and better prepared for future challenges. The result was that he not only won the 2008 NL batting title, but along the way, he rewrote the record books with a broad stroke of his Rawlings Big Stick bat.

The evidence is quite impressive:

* Braves' first batting champion (.364) since Terry Pendleton in 1991.

* Set NL season record for batting average by a switch-hitter, surpassing the .355 of George Davis in 1893.

* Batted .399 at Turner Field, the highest home batting average in Atlanta history.

* At age 36, became the oldest Brave to win a batting title, as well as the oldest switch-hitter in major league history to win a batting title.

"Last year, I put a lot of pressure on myself to go out and get a hit every time up to the plate," he said. "This year, I just kind of took what pitchers gave me. I wasn't disappointed losing the batting title last year. I hit for a higher average than I ever have, so I couldn't be disappointed, and this year was much the same."

Who knows? Perhaps there's more to come...

Chipper's average has increased each of the last three seasons - from .324 in 2006 to .337 last year and .364 this year. His cumulative average over the last three seasons is a flashy .342 (466-for-1,363).

Chipper finished with a seven-point edge over the Cardinals' Albert Pujols (.364 to .357) to win his first Louisville Slugger Silver Bat Award that will be presented to him early next season at Turner Field.

His batting average was just two percentage points shy of the Atlanta record of .366 set in 1970 by Rico Carty and but one point behind the major league record for a switch-hitter (.365) set by Mickey Mantle in 1957.

"I want in some way to be mentioned with the Mantles and the [Eddie] Murrays of the switch-hitting world, but I don't know that there will ever come a time that my numbers approach Mickey Mantle's," said Chipper, whose last chance to pass Mantle resulted in a four-pitch walk from Houston's Jose Valverde in the ninth inning of the season finale. "I think 99.9 percent of the people that have anything to do with baseball will tell you long after I'm done playing that he's the best switch-hitter of all-time."

While history will judge Jones' final standing, there was a historic theme run-

ning through his performance for the entire 2008 season.

The tone was set in the season-opener, when, in the fourth inning, he crushed a 2-0 pitch from Washington Nationals pitcher, and former Braves teammate, Odalis Perez over the wall in center field for the first home run in brand-new Nationals Park.

He came out of the season's first week hitting .423 and was the major league's pacesetter in batting average, a position he maintained nearly all year.

CHIPPER'S CHART

BRAVES NL BATTING CHAMPS

1877	Deacon White	.387
1889	Dan Brouthers	.373
1894	Hugh Duffy	.440
1928	Rogers Hornsby	.387
1942	Ernie Lombardi	.330
1956	Hank Aaron	.328
1959	Hank Aaron	.355
1970	Ralph Garr	.353
1991	Terry Pendleton	.319
2008	Chipper Jones	.364

FRANCHISE SEASON BA

.387	Rogers Hornsby	1928
.366	Rico Carty	1970
.364	Chipper Jones	2008
.355	Hank Aaron	1959
.353	Ralph Garr	1974

FRANCHISE SEASON BA AT 3B

.364	Chipper Jones	2008
.346	Jimmy Collins	1897

Pendleton was impressed but not surprised by Jones' ability to lead the batting race almost wire-to-wire.

"He's that type of hitter," said Pendleton, who was the last National League switch-hitter to win a batting title (.319 in 1991). "I don't even know any other way to explain it. He can flat-out hit. Chipper works, but a lot of it's come natural for him. It's like God tapped him on the head and said, 'You're a hitter. That's what you do.'"

It's what he did better than anyone else all season, even hitting at better than a .400 pace into mid-June. No major leaguer has finished at .400 or better since Ted Williams in 1941 (.406). Chipper finally dipped under the mark for good on June 19 when he went 0-for-4 at Texas. However, according to Trent McCotter of the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR), the 67 days

Jones spent over .400 was longer than any stretch Williams spent over the mark in '41 (his long was 62 days) and the longest span over .400 in over a decade, since Larry Walker lasted 88 days in 1997.

As the nightly media scrutiny surrounding Chipper's .400 hitting dissipated - much to his relief - his focus remained on what he does best, hitting consistently and chalking up multi-hit games (he led the team with 44). Only once all season did he go three consecutive starts without getting a hit, and he never went consecutive games without reaching base via hit or walk.

It seemed that only injuries - to his right quad, his left hamstring and his right shoulder - which cost him 34 games and 47 starts could slow him down on the way to the batting title. But nothing stopped him.

The race to the title got interesting in late August, when Pujols pulled even with Jones during the Braves' three-game set at St. Louis, Aug. 22 through 24. Pujols was a sizzling 8-for-10 and climbed to .359.

For the next three weeks, Jones and Pujols battled, with Pujols taking the lead on Aug. 31 and opening a five-point lead (.364 to .359). But Chipper answered, going on a five-game tear from Sept. 7 - 14, hitting .462 (12-for-26) and recording four multi-hit games, including three three-hit games, to raise his average to .365 and regain the lead.

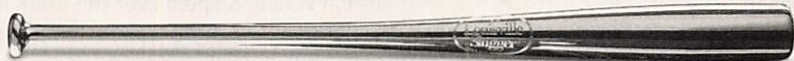
Fittingly, he took the lead for good on Sept. 10 with a three-hit game at Turner Field against the Colorado Rockies and Matt Holliday, who beat him for the title last year. The last of those four multi-hit games came Sept. 14 in his final appearance at one of his favorite venues, doomed Shea Stadium, when he banged out three hits in five trips to the plate.

Chipper didn't have another multi-hit game the rest of the season, though, and made only four more starts before pulling himself in the sixth inning of the Sept. 19 game against the Mets at Turner Field. Right shoulder inflammation rendered him a pinch-hitter the remainder of the season, but even in that role he found a way to amaze.

With the Braves leading, 6-3, on Sept. 24, Phillies manager Charlie Manuel chose to pitch to Jones, with runners on first and second. This was only three days after Mets manager Jerry Manuel intentionally walked Chipper in the bottom of the eighth, with two on and the Braves having rallied to take

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

WHAT'S CHIPPER GET?



For winning the National League batting title, Chipper Jones will receive the Silver Bat Award from Louisville Slugger. One of the most prestigious awards in sports, the Silver Bat is silver plated in sterling, weighs approximately 56 ounces, is 34 inches long, and will be engraved with Chipper's autograph and his 2008 statistics. Louisville Slugger initiated the award in 1949 when Brooklyn's Jackie Robinson and Detroit's George Kell were the first recipients. An official of Hillerich & Bradsby, makers of Louisville Slugger bats, will present the award to Chipper early next season at Turner Field.

a 5-4 lead. Chipper, batting right-handed, proceeded to hit a 2-1 pitch from Phils lefty Scott Eyre just inside the foul poll down the left field line for his second career pinch-homer and his first since July 2, 2006. The home run, the 408th of his career, moved him past legendary Brooklyn Dodgers centerfielder Duke Snider into 42nd place on the all-time list - former Brave Darrell Evans is his next target at 414.

Perhaps the most amazing part of Jones' 2008 performance is that he won the batting title at age 36, when he's supposed to be on the downside of his career. Previously, the oldest Brave to win the batting crown was Ernie Lombardi, who won it in 1942 at age 34. And his .364 average is the highest in the NL since 2002 when Barry Bonds finished at .370.

"Everybody wrote him off," said Kelly Johnson. "He had his career-worst year five years ago, and here he is five years later having his career-best

year. I think everybody knows he's one of the chosen ones."

"He's the consummate professional," added reliever Will Ohman, who watched as a teammate when Cubs first baseman Derrek Lee won the NL batting title in 2005. "He's going out there and giving everything he's got, even though our team has not performed as well as we'd like. He lost the protection every day of having [Mark Teixeira] in the lineup, and he's still done quite well.

"For me, the most impressive thing is he's doing it as a switch-hitter," Ohman continued. "To be equally good from both sides of the plate as often as they switch him around in late situations - teams that are in the playoff hunt are doing everything they can to neutralize him. He has incredible gifts to begin with, but to really harness those and to understand how he's going to

be attacked, he always puts himself in the best possible scenario for success. By doing that, he also puts our team in the best chance for having success."

Jones' ability to counter physical adversity and batting title pressure with mental strength also has been a key the last two seasons.

"Chipper just adjusts so well," said Mike Gonzalez, who saw the toll a batting race took on then-Pittsburgh teammate Freddy Sanchez, the 2006 NL batting champion. "You're talking about an adjustment from one at-bat to the next, but I've seen Chipper

do it from one pitch to the next pitch, making the adjustment like that."

Consistency and a sweet swing are what separate Chipper from the rest.

"When you watch highlights of Chipper Jones, even to this day, you can pick any year and it looks the same because he doesn't change very much," said

Braves radio analyst and former teammate Mark Lemke. "His stroke is still the same, he still looks the same.

"He probably doesn't feel the same as he did back then," he added with a laugh, "but every year, to me, just runs together with Chipper Jones, because he's so consistent."

"The older you get, if you have the ability, you're going to know what your swing feels like," added fellow switch-hitter Greg Norton, who was a teammate of 1997 AL batting champ Frank Thomas and '01 NL champ Larry Walker. "You're able to get out of funks quicker, and being around, you're going to know pitchers more and just know how certain teams or certain pitchers are going to try to pitch you. So the knowledge helps you. Your body might be going down hill, but your mind's going to be better when you get a little bit older."



PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

CHIPPER'S SPLITS

Vs. LH Pitchers	.394
Vs. RH Pitchers	.349
Home	.399
Away	.325
Day	.365
Night	.364
March/April	.422
May	.417
June	.328
July	.270
August	.315
September	.408
Before A-S Game	.376
After A-S Game	.340
Leading Off	.361
Bases Empty	.344
Runner on 1B	.485
Runner on 2B	.214
Runner on 3B	.455
Runners on 1B, 2B	.367
Runners on 1B, 3B	.308
Runners on 2B, 3B	.000
Bases Loaded	.375
RISP	.294
Late/Close	.310
Ahead in Count	.388
Behind in Count	.238
No Outs	.402
One Out	.407
Two Outs	.305
First Inning	.373
Extra Inning	.400
Vs. Anaheim	.000
Vs. Oakland	.300
Vs. Seattle	.333
Vs. Texas	.182
Vs. Arizona	.444
Vs. Cubs	.250
Vs. Cincinnati	.360
Vs. Colorado	.414
Vs. Florida	.456
Vs. Houston	.357
Vs. Dodgers	.286
Vs. Milwaukee	.500
Vs. Mets	.357
Vs. Philadelphia	.457
Vs. Pittsburgh	.393
Vs. San Diego	.381
Vs. San Francisco	.267
Vs. St. Louis	.333
Vs. Washington	.317

TOTAL RECALL

*Homework, Good Memory
Enable Chipper To Improve Hitting
Despite Age, Injuries*

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

"AN ELEPHANT NEVER FORGETS," according to the old adage. Much the same can now be said for the new National League batting champion.

"I feel like I'm one of the most prepared guys out there on the field on a nightly basis, because I do my homework," said Chipper Jones during the final weekend of the season in Houston, when he essentially had a lock on the NL batting crown and was reduced to a pinch-hitting role due to a sore shoulder that proved to be the result of tendinitis.

"Earning a batting title at this point in my career just goes to show you what a lot of hours in the film room, a lot of times through the league, and a lot of experience can do for you. It can make you a much smarter hitter."

By hitting .364, Chipper broke the NL season record for a switch-hitter (.355), set in 1893 by "Gorgeous" George Davis of the New York Giants. And he was just one point behind one of his baseball heroes, Mickey Mantle, who established the season switch-hitting record in 1957 of .365. At 36, Jones also became the oldest switch-hitter to win the batting title. Boston's Bill Mueller, the last switch-hitter to lead either league in hitting, won the AL batting title in 2003 at age 32.

Larry Jones, Chipper's father and mentor, cited his son's ability to recall pitches and pitch sequences used against him in previous at-bats as a secret weapon in his arsenal.

"I used to get all over him about the at-bats he wasted when he was younger. He used to give at-bats away," Larry said. "There wasn't any of that this season. He was completely locked in from both sides of the plate, which was great to see. Watching as a fan, he was just unreal!"

Jones said the actual Silver Bat award he'll receive from Louisville Slugger at Turner Field in April will go in his Atlanta home. He has a special spot picked out for it in his newly remodeled basement room, alongside his 1999 NL Most Valuable Player trophy, his 1995 World Series replica trophy, and all the other awards that he's collected through the course of his All-Star career.

"With his performance last year and again this year, Chipper's proven he can lead the league in hitting," said Bobby Cox.

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ROAD TO THE BATTING TITLE

DATE	OPPONENT	AB	H	AVG.
March				
30	@WSH	4	1	.250
31	PIT	6	2	.300

April				
2	PIT	3	2	.385
3	PIT	5	3	.444
5	NYM	5	3	.478
6	NYM	3	0	.423
7	@COL	4	1	.400
8	@COL	4	1	.382
9	@COL	5	2	.385
11	@WSH	4	1	.372
12	@WSH	1	1	.386
13	@WSH	5	3	.408
15	@FLA	4	2	.415
16	@FLA	4	1	.404
17	@FLA	4	4	.443
18	LAD	5	3	.455
19	LAD	3	1	.449
20	LAD	3	2	.458
21	WSH	3	1	.453
22	WSH	4	0	.430
23	FLA	4	1	.422
24	FLA	3	3	.442
25	@NYM	4	1	.433
29	@WSH	5	2	.432
30	@WSH	5	0	.410

May				
2	CIN	3	2	.417
3	CIN	4	2	.421
4	CIN	6	3	.425
6	SD	2	1	.426
7	SD	4	2	.429
8	SD	5	1	.419
9	@PIT	2	0	.413
10	@PIT	4	0	.400
12	@PIT	4	3	.410
12	@PIT	4	1	.406
13	@PHI	4	3	.415
14	@PHI	4	2	.418
16	OAK	3	2	.423
17	OAK	4	0	.412
18	OAK	3	1	.410
20	NYM	4	1	.406
20	NYM	4	2	.409
21	NYM	2	1	.410
22	NYM	4	2	.412
23	ARI	1	1	.415
24	ARI	4	2	.417
26	ARI	3	1	.416
27	@MIL	4	2	.418
28	@MIL	2	1	.418
29	@MIL	4	2	.420
30	@CIN	5	0	.409
31	@CIN	3	2	.413

June				
1	@CIN	4	0	.405
2	FLA	4	2	.407
3	FLA	4	2	.409
5	FLA	5	4	.418
6	PHI	3	2	.421
7	PHI	3	1	.420
10	@CHC	0	0	.420
11	@CHC	3	1	.419
12	@CHC	5	1	.414
14	@LAA	3	0	.409
15	@LAA	4	0	.402

16	@COL	4	2	.403
17	@TEX	2	0	.400
18	@TEX	5	2	.400
19	@TEX	4	0	.394
20	SEA	2	0	.390
21	SEA	1	1	.393
24	MIL	1	1	.395
25	MIL	1	0	.394

July				
1	PHI	3	1	.393
2	PHI	4	1	.391
3	PHI	4	1	.389
4	HOU	4	2	.390
5	HOU	4	0	.385
6	HOU	5	3	.388
7	@LAD	3	0	.384
8	@LAD	4	0	.379
9	@LAD	3	0	.375
11	@SD	4	1	.373
12	@SD	4	3	.378
13	@SD	2	0	.376
18	WSH	3	1	.375
19	WSH	4	1	.374
20	WSH	3	1	.373
21	@FLA	4	1	.372
22	@FLA	3	1	.371
23	@FLA	2	0	.369

August				
8	@ARI	4	2	.371
9	@ARI	3	1	.370
10	@ARI	3	1	.370
13	CHC	3	1	.370
14	CHC	5	1	.367
15	SF	4	1	.366
16	SF	3	1	.365
17	SF	4	1	.364
18	SF	4	1	.363
19	@NYM	3	2	.365
20	@NYM	3	0	.362
21	@NYM	2	0	.360
22	@STL	4	1	.359
23	@STL	5	2	.360
24	@STL	3	1	.359
26	FLA	5	1	.357
27	FLA	4	1	.356
28	FLA	3	2	.359
29	@WSH	3	1	.358
30	@WSH	5	2	.359

September				
1	@FLA	4	1	.358
4	WSH	1	1	.359
5	WSH	3	0	.357
6	WSH	4	1	.356
7	WSH	6	3	.358
9	COL	4	2	.359
10	COL	4	3	.363
11	COL	4	1	.362
14	@NYM	5	3	.365
16	PHI	2	1	.365
17	PHI	3	1	.365
18	PHI	3	1	.365
19	NYM	3	0	.362
21	NYM	0	0	.362
22	@PHI	1	1	.364
24	@PHI	1	1	.365
26	@HOU	0	0	.365
27	@HOU	1	0	.364
28	@HOU	0	0	.364



MY MENTAL OUTLOOK AIDED HITTING STREAK

IT WAS A TOUGH YEAR all the way around with injuries to our team. It got to the point that you have to find something to keep you going. The thing that helped me was to come to the park and try to have fun and enjoy everyone that was there, teammates, coaches, the media in the locker room, people, fans, whatever - just have that attitude at the forefront.

But because I'm a guy that's analytical and thinks about a lot of stuff, sometimes too much, it can be hard to do. I tried to put less emphasis on the work, doing extra hitting or extra fielding, and more emphasis on saving that energy for the games. I tried not to take the game too seriously, which I think helped a ton. At the same time, it had a good effect of saving my energy for the game, which was what I was trying to do.

A lot of times, I was wearing myself out practicing, or getting down on myself because I wasn't practicing the way I wanted to practice. So when I cut down on that stuff, it had a positive effect on my hitting.

My swing was fine. It was more of a mental adjustment than anything during the (22-game) hitting streak. Everybody has streaks or good months, and it's difficult to pinpoint exactly what happened.

I've had plenty of good months, and each time I would have said something different as to why I'd had success. Obviously, it's not just one thing that you can go back to. It's a wonderful feeling. It's a complicated game, and I'm just

glad I had this stretch to end the year on a good note and take something positive into the off-season.

You can catch yourself worrying about how you're feeling, waiting for your time when you perform the way you know you can perform. That's why baseball is so frustrating.

We've all had games where we've gone 4-for-4 or 5-for-5 with two home runs and drove in five runs. Everyone here has had that day, so you feel like it's right there and you just have to get it. You're thinking, "What can I do to get that day to happen every other day?"

During that hitting streak, it was like having "that day" over and over again, or at least the feeling. Once you hit the ball, you can't control it. So, all you can do is have that good, balanced feeling when you're at the plate, and when you take a swing, hope you're able to connect for a hit.

I definitely feel that I'm ending the season with a balanced feeling, maybe even with a bit of a high. Ending on a positive note balances out the entire sum of the season.

At the same time, everyone has their own demons, and mine has always been, "When am I going to realize the potential I think I have and start playing a little more relaxed, the way you play Wiffle ball with your friends when you're a kid and you know that you're the best one there?" That kind of confidence is what you want, and it can carry you a long way. That's why it's important to have something like what I had in September to build on.

You can have hot streaks when it really doesn't matter what you do, because you know you're going to get a hit. That's how well you're seeing the ball. But to do that for a whole month and have success doing other things feels a little more like it's in your control.

Carrying that feeling through the off-season comes down to confidence. From day one in pro ball, everybody always says, "It's not how you start, it's how you finish," and finishing the way I did this season will build my confidence. I'll come into spring next year with the most confidence possible.

"Earning the batting title is just one more step towards the Hall of Fame."

Although Jones finished the 2007 season at .337, right behind Colorado's Matt Holliday (.340), he's never questioned his inability to win the title last year.

"I got so many questions at the end of last season asking if I was disappointed by not getting the batting title," he said. "I couldn't be disappointed, because I hit higher last year than I ever had in my life. So, to have hit close to .340 last year and to have hit .364 this year, that's a couple of pretty good years."

Asked whether he's surprised by this leap in average, Jones answered thoughtfully, "I didn't really see myself as that type of player. My career average is .310, and my average coming up through the minor leagues was .311. So, I always thought of myself as a solid .300 hitter, but not really a guy who was going to go out and hit .340, .350, .360."

But a fast start (.400 or better through June 18) and consistency at the plate laid the foundation for his batting title.

"It was vitally important to have the hot streak at the start of the season," Chipper said. "I was 200-plus at bats into the season and I was still hitting .400."

Pujols took the lead over Chipper on Aug. 30 by three points (.362 to .359) and held it until Sept. 10, when Chipper went 3-for-4 against the Rockies, raising his average to .363, a point better than Pujols.

"I knew for the last 4 to 5 days of the season that my average wasn't going to fluctuate more than a point since I was unable to play," said Jones. "It was hard not to pay attention to what Albert was doing. The man piles up hits like dirty laundry!"

"I said a month (before the end of the season) it doesn't matter who wins the batting title this year, I still think of Albert Pujols as the best hitter in the game," said Jones. "It's an honor to have gone through this race and have him in the rear view mirror."

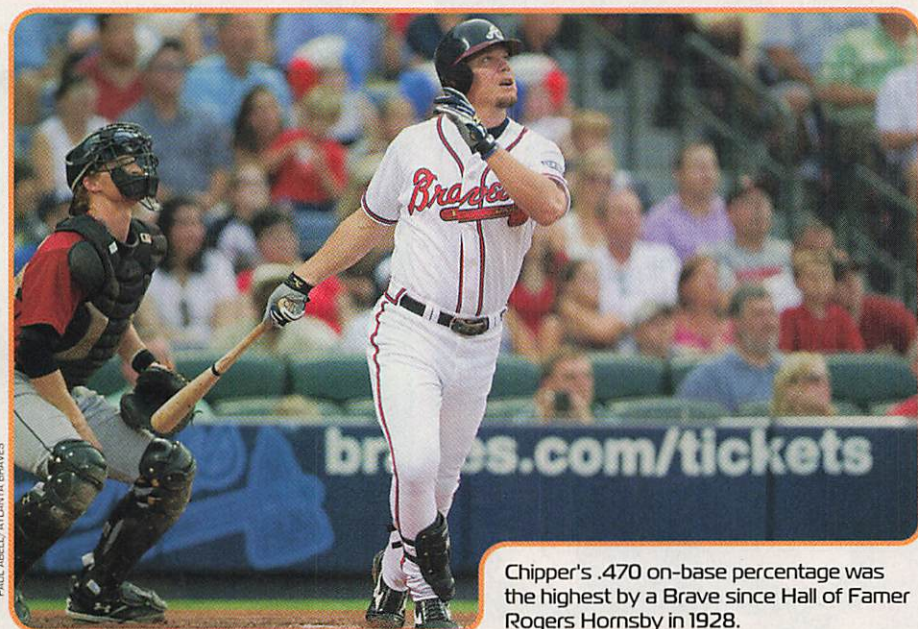
"For me it's one of my crowning accomplishments," he said. "I'm extremely proud of it, because it's not easy to do. I expected to come into this season hitting as well, if not better than I hit last year. But to go out at the beginning of the season and say, 'I'm going to win a batting championship,' is not only unlikely, but it shouldn't be a goal. You can't control what Albert Pujols does or what Lance Berkman does. Those are the elite hitters in the NL and can hit anywhere from .320 to .380. I certainly feel like I'm one of those guys, though."

"The baseball gods have smiled on me more than others."

“IT’S A COMPLICATED GAME, AND I’M JUST GLAD I HAD THIS STRETCH TO END THE YEAR ON A GOOD NOTE...”

BEHIND THE NUMBERS

CHIPPER'S KNACK FOR GETTING ON BASE



PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

Chipper's .470 on-base percentage was the highest by a Brave since Hall of Famer Rogers Hornsby in 1928.

BY STEVE FALL

CHIPPER JONES not only became the first Brave to capture the National League batting title since Terry Pendleton (1991), but he also finished with an amazing .470 on-base percentage (OBP). Just eight major leaguers have reached that level since 1970. Jones had the highest on-base percentage by a Braves batting title qualifier since Rogers Hornsby in 1928 (.498). Two pre-1900 players in franchise history had OBP higher than Chipper: Hugh Duffy (.502 in 1894) and Billy Hamilton (.480 in 1898 and .477 in 1896).

Among switch-hitters, only Mickey Mantle previously had a higher on-base percentage than .470 (.512 OBP in 1957 and .486 in 1962). Jones' feat was extremely rare for players of his age (36). In major league history, only Barry Bonds (.515 in 2001) and Babe Ruth (.494, 1931) had a .470 on-base percentage in their age-36 seasons.

Chipper completed his second straight season with a .335 or higher batting average (.364 and .337). No Brave had topped that level in successive seasons since 1900. Four players in franchise history did it during the 1800s (Duffy, Hamilton, Tommy McCarthy and Jimmy Bannon).

Jones became just the eighth major leaguer ever to hit .335 or better in his age-35 and 36 seasons. The other seven - Cap Anson (1887-88), Ty Cobb (1922-23), Tris Speaker 1923-24, Sam Rice (1925-26), Babe

Ruth (1930-31), Bill Terry (1934-35) and Tony Gwynn (1995-96) - are all in the Hall of Fame.

The Braves had a productive infield and a tremendous hitting catcher in Brian McCann. Unfortunately, they also had the NL's worst-hitting outfield. The Atlanta infield - including the numbers for the team's catchers - hit 94 home runs and drove in 499 runs. Those figures ranked seventh and third among NL infields, respectively. The outfield's 27 homers ranked last in the league and its 212 RBIs placed 14th. Braves infielders had huge advantages over the outfielders in batting average (.290 to .260), on-base percentage (.369 to .324) and slugging percentage (.453 to .367). The infielders placed third, second and fourth in the NL in those categories, compared to 12th, 15th and 16th for the outfielders. The infielders even had an enormous edge in stolen bases (46 to 8).

Most teams get better production from their outfield than infield. The Braves followed a dramatically different pattern. On-base plus slugging percentage, which summarizes offense as well as any statistic, reveals the disparity. Braves infielders had an .822 OPS versus .691 for the outfielders. That difference of 131 percentage points far exceeded any other NL club.

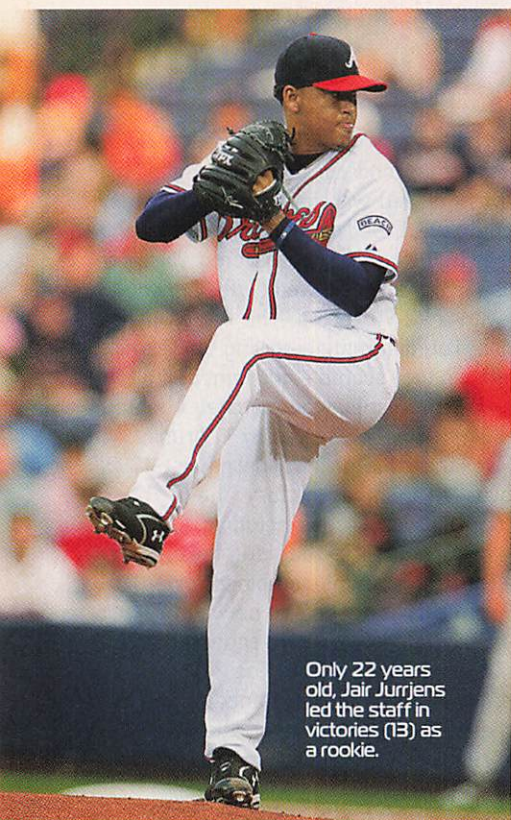
For the second consecutive season, the Braves finished with fewer wins than they should have, based on their runs scored and allowed figures. The club scored 25 fewer runs (753) than it allowed (778), yet wound up with a 72-90 record. The Astros had a similar run differential - giving up 31 more runs than they scored - but went 86-75 this season. The Giants, who matched Atlanta's 72-90 mark, got outscored by 119 runs.

Five other teams in modern (post-1900) Braves franchise history have been outscored by 25 runs, including the 1901 Boston Beaneaters. That club finished 69-69. Those five teams combined for a 375-379 mark. That projects to between 80 and 81 wins over a 162-game schedule and a .497 winning percentage. The 2008 Braves had a .444 figure. Performance in one-run games was the main reason. Atlanta had 11 one-run wins - fewest in the majors - versus 30 one-run losses.

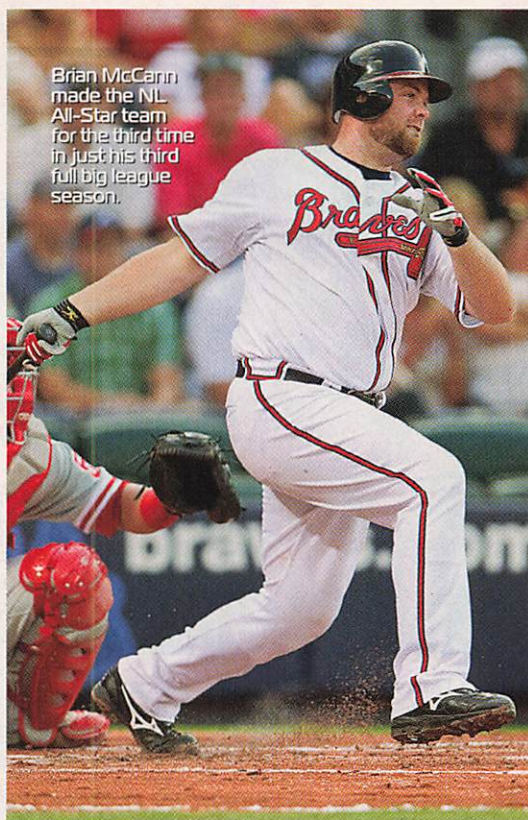
The Braves had 10 different pitchers make at least five starts this season. That's the most by any Atlanta club since 1978. That '78 team, the first of Bobby Cox's managing career, also had 10 five-start pitchers. Amazingly, from 1991 through 1995, the Braves had just nine different pitchers make five or more starts in a season during that entire five-year run.

With all the injuries to starting pitchers, only Jair Jurrjens (31) and Jorge Campillo (25) made at least 25 starts for this year. That's the first time since 1977 that just one Atlanta starter had over 25 starts (excluding strike-shortened seasons). Phil Niekro started 43 games that year, 20 more than runnerup Dick Ruthven.

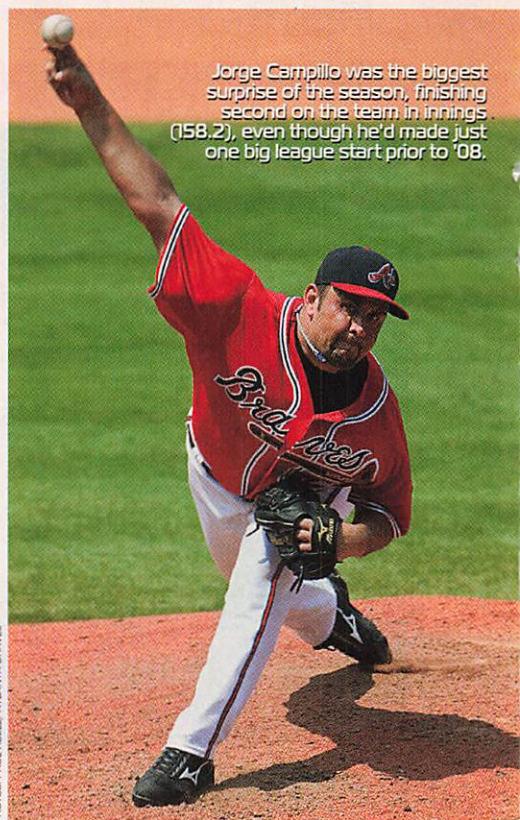
Kelly Johnson's 22-game hitting streak in September was the longest by a Braves second baseman since Red Schoendienst hit safely in 23 straight for the World Champion 1957 Milwaukee Braves. After his torrid finish, Johnson totaled 39 doubles. That ranks fourth among second basemen in franchise history. He surpassed all except Marcus Giles (49 in 2003 and 45 in 2005) and Rogers Hornsby (42, 1928). Johnson had 57 extra-base hits (12 home runs, 39 doubles and six triples), seventh-best ever by a Braves second baseman.



Only 22 years old, Jair Jurrjens led the staff in victories (13) as a rookie.



Brian McCann made the NL All-Star team for the third time in just his third full big league season.



Jorge Campillo was the biggest surprise of the season, finishing second on the team in innings (158.2), even though he'd made just one big league start prior to '08.

PHOTOS: PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

SEASON IN REVIEW

Decimated Pitching Staff Doomed Any Chance Of Contending

BY MARK BOWMAN OF MLB.COM

WITH TOM GLAVINE being reunited with John Smoltz and Bobby Cox, this was supposed to be a year when the Braves returned to the glory days. Instead, it proved to be a third straight year in which Atlanta was denied its once annual tradition of celebrating a post-season berth.

Pre-season predictions of a Braves run toward the World Series were wrecked by the decimation of a potentially strong pitching staff. The bullpen spent most of the year without two top relievers - closer Rafael Soriano and primary setup man Peter Moylan. The starting rotation became a shell of its projected self when three of its four former 20-game winners were all lost to season-ending surgeries.

"You can get by when you lose a key position player to injury," said Bobby Cox. "We've done that in the past. But when you start losing [starting pitchers] like we did, it's almost impossible to overcome."

With a projected rotation that included

TEAM LEADERS

HITTERS

Average	.364	Chipper Jones
Home Runs	23	Brian McCann
RBI's	87	Brian McCann
Hits	160	Chipper Jones
Runs	86	Kelly Johnson
Doubles	42	Brian McCann
Triples	6	Kelly Johnson
Walks	90	Chipper Jones
Steals	13	Gregor Blanco

PITCHERS

Wins	13	Jair Jurrjens
ERA	3.17	Tim Hudson
Games	83	Will Ohman
Saves	14	Mike Gonzalez
Innings	188 1/3	Jair Jurrjens
Strikeouts	139	Jair Jurrjens

Smoltz, Glavine and Mike Hampton, who hadn't pitched since making 12 starts in 2005, the Braves looked at the starting rotation as a calculated gamble. Glavine had never previously been on the disabled list, and Smoltz had managed to pitch effectively while battling shoulder discomfort throughout the final four months of the 2007 season.

But Smoltz's shoulder proved too painful by the end of April, and Glavine proved healthy for only three of the 13 starts he made before undergoing season-ending elbow surgery in August. As for Tim Hudson, the right elbow that had never previously given him problems was repaired with a new ligament in August, and he'll miss the first four months of the 2009 season.

"We were happy with the pitching depth that we had entering the season," said Frank Wren. "But we couldn't envision what happened. I don't think anybody could have."

Chipper Jones carried the offense during

a standout season that would have proven to be even better had he not battled multiple injuries after the All-Star break. His first career batting title came during a year when he batted over .400 through mid-June and benefited from the opportunity to bat in front of Mark Teixeira for four months.

With the pitching woes mounting and no indication that they'd have a chance to resign Teixeira, the Braves essentially waved the white flag on July 29, when they traded him to the Angels. Gone were his power and any hope that a miraculous finish would develop during the season's final two months.

During the first 35 games that followed the Teixeira trade, the Braves went 11-24 (.314) and posted a 6.00 ERA. The power loss was evident in August, when they hit a major league-low 14 homers and compiled a .382 slugging percentage, 31 points lower than the mark they produced with Teixeira.

September was more memorable, because the Braves proved at least capable of playing the role of spoiler. By splitting the final 12 games they played against the Mets and Phillies, they made sure those two teams had to battle each other into the season's final weekend for the division crown

that many had predicted would once again return to Atlanta.

"Things didn't work out the way we wanted," said All-Star catcher Brian McCann. "But you can't lose Smoltz, Glavine and Hudson and think things are going to be okay."

Record: 72-90, fourth place in NL East.

Defining moment: On consecutive days against the Phillies, July 26 and July 27, the Braves blew fifth-inning leads of at least four runs. That dropped them 7 1/2 games back in the NL East, and two days later, they traded Teixeira to the Angels in exchange for first baseman Casey Kotchman and minor league pitcher Stephen Marek.

What went right: Despite battling numerous nagging injuries, Jones once again proved to be one of the National League's top threats at the plate. With Teixeira, the Braves' lineup was potentially lethal. Without him, it persevered and benefited from the strong finishes provided by both Kelly Johnson and Martin Prado. Johnson's impressive September gives reason to wonder if he's ready to consistently prove

why so many in the Braves organization believe he has a bright future.

What went wrong: While it would be easy to answer, "just about everything", injuries played the biggest role in this year's disappointments. Had just one of the former 20-game winners been lost, the emergence of Jair Jurrjens and Jorge Campillo might have provided sufficient compensation. The fractured rotation further weakened a bullpen that proved to be fatigued down the stretch. With these unavoidable problems, Jeff Francoeur was faced with constant scrutiny while enduring the worst season of his young career.

Biggest surprise: Campillo began the season with Triple-A Richmond and, despite having made just one career start before May 20, ended with the second-most innings on the Atlanta pitching staff. Campillo's consistency makes him a definite candidate to fill one of the final spots in next year's starting rotation. This certainly wasn't envisioned when the 29-year-old rookie came to camp this past year as a non-roster invitee who had spent most of his professional career in the Mexican League.



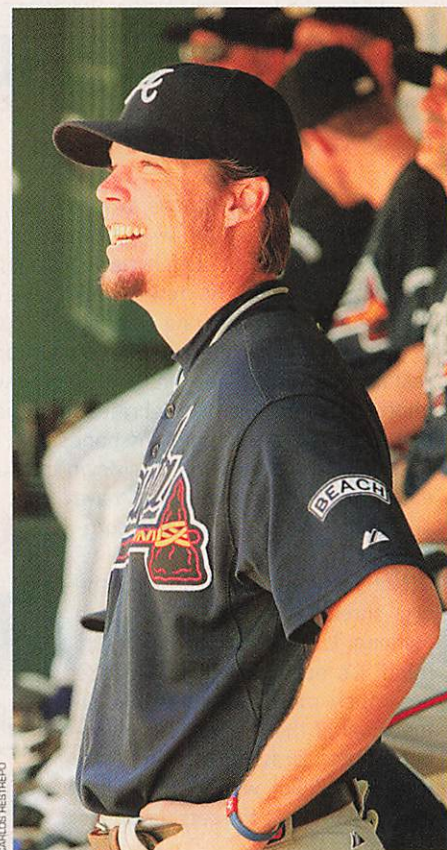
CHIPPER'S CLIMB ALL-TIME HOME RUNS

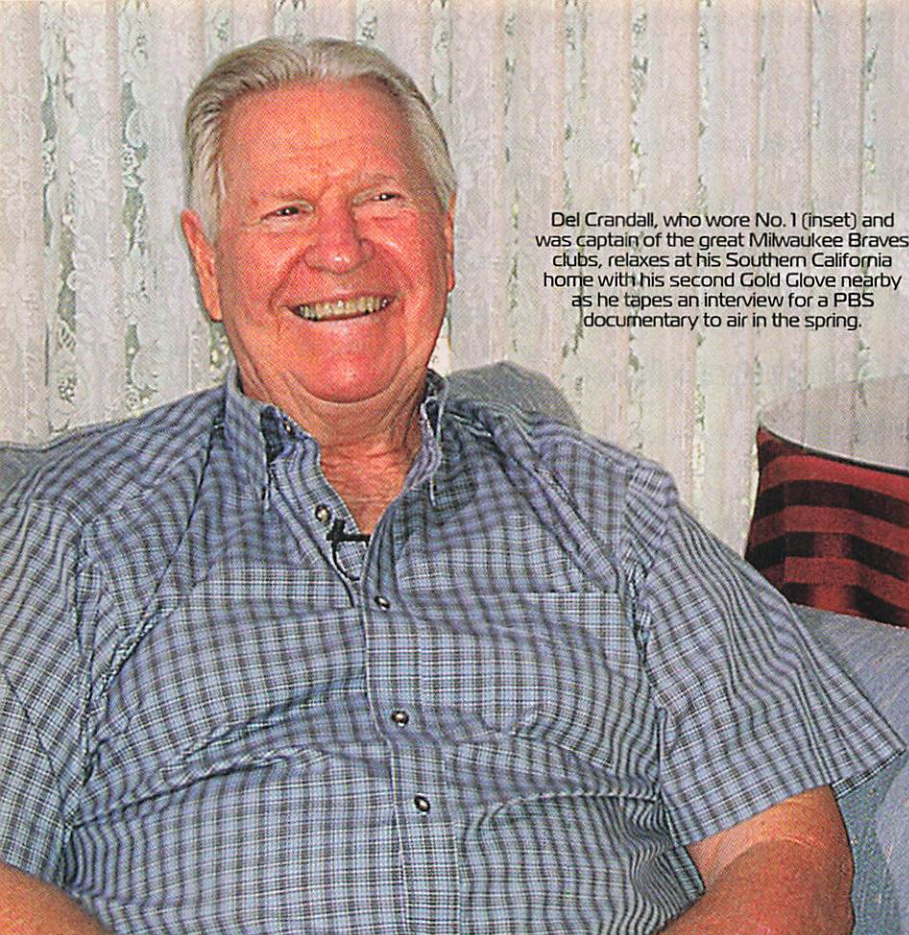
38.	Cal Ripken*	431
39.	Mike Piazza	427
40.	Billy Williams*	426
41.	Darrell Evans	414
42.	Chipper Jones (R)	408
43.	Duke Snider*	407

* HALL OF FAMER

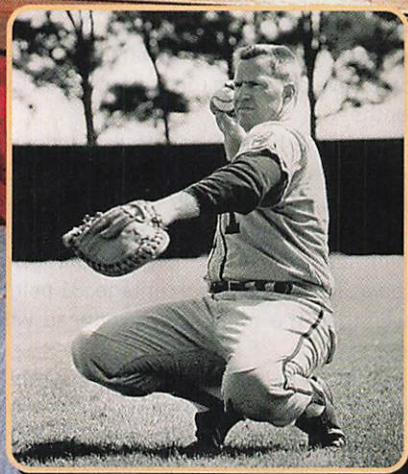
LONGEST ATLANTA HITTING STREAKS

31	Rico Carty	1970
29	Rowland Office	1976
28	Marquis Grissom	1996
24	Gary Sheffield	2003
23	Edgar Renteria	2006
22	Felipe Alou	1968
	Hank Aaron	1971
	Ralph Garr	1971
	Kelly Johnson (L)	2008





Del Crandall, who wore No. 1 (inset) and was captain of the great Milwaukee Braves clubs, relaxes at his Southern California home with his second Gold Glove nearby as he tapes an interview for a PBS documentary to air in the spring.



SOLID GOLD

From an Embarrassing, 2-Pitch Debut, Del Crandall Caught On Quickly En Route To Braves Hall of Fame

BY GARY CARUSO

DEL CRANDALL drives around Brea, California, in relative anonymity, despite the "Del 1" license tag on his Toyota van.

"My sister got that tag for me years ago," said Crandall, giving the impression that he never would have ordered it himself but that it's nice that someone else thought to do it.

He takes some visitors to El Cholo for lunch, one of his favorite restaurants where the walls are covered with 8x10 autographed photos from dozens of celebrities in all fields - including baseball. But there's not one of the handsome, quiet, mild-mannered Crandall, who lives 5 minutes down the street and probably has eaten there more times than have all the hot shots on the walls combined.

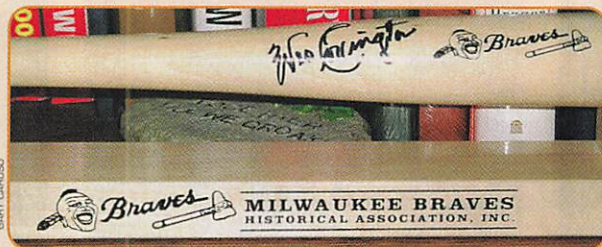
Not that the man who won the first three Gold Gloves ever by a National League catcher seems to mind. It's not his style. Plus there are much more urgent things on the mind of the 78-year-old member of the Braves Hall of Fame (Class of 2003) who Hank Aaron always names as the catcher on his "all-time team."

Crandall's wife, Fran, has been in a rehabilitation facility for five weeks, where she's trying to recover from breaking her knee in a fall at home. Though the Crandalls' six children are all grown, the oldest, Del Jr., is mentally challenged and lives in a state facility. The Crandalls, however, keep a room, decorated with a baseball theme, for him when he visits their modest home in a retirement community.

So, it's just Del and his 2-year-old Shih Tzu, Bonnie, at home. Del welcomes his visitors, but Bonnie makes it known that she's not so sure about them.

"This batchin' it is rough," said Crandall of his weeks without having Fran at home.

Anyone expecting to see memorabilia from his 16-year playing career that included 12 All-Star selections, two National League pennants with the Milwaukee Braves, and the 1957 World Championship is in for a surprise. He allowed Sotheby's to auction off the bulk of his personal memorabilia last year, keeping little except



This mini-bat signed by former teammate Wes Covington is Crandall's reminder of last summer's 50-year reunion of the 1957 World Champion Braves.

his Gold Gloves and Braves World Championship ring, though his children have the ring and two of his overall four Gold Gloves (1958, '59, '60 and '62).

Though he looks in good shape, except for the self-acknowledged spread around the belt, Crandall, who played at 6-1, 195 pounds, admits he's not very active.

"I'm a sitter," he said. "I like to watch that tube."

Unlike many baseball "lifers," Crandall isn't a golfer. He has 11 grandchildren and one great-grandchild, who keep him busy. And until three years ago, he still worked in baseball, most recently as an instructor in the Dodgers farm system. In fact, he was a manager, coach and instructor in their system for years and received a 1981 World Championship ring for the role he played in helping to develop their players.

Besides his long and accomplished playing career with the Braves (1949-63), Giants (1964), Pirates (1965) and Indians (1966), Crandall managed the Brewers (1972-75) and Mariners (1983-84), and spent several years in broadcasting (Brewers and White Sox) before locking in with the Dodgers. In July, he was inducted into the Albuquerque Professional Baseball Hall of Fame for his five years managing the Dodgers' top farm club, four of which ended with Pacific Coast League championships.

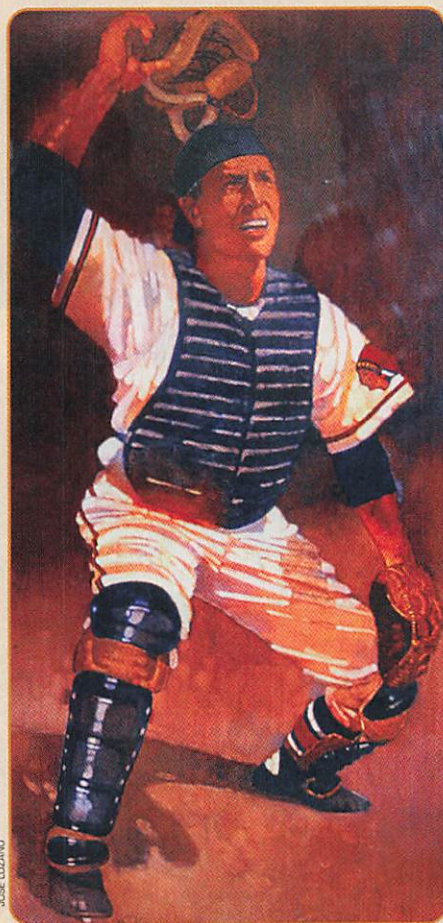
His closest ties in baseball now seem to be 15 minutes south in Anaheim, where one of his former protégés, Mike Scioscia, manages the Angels.

Though Crandall is best remembered for his Gold Glove fielding, he was an excellent hitter, too, especially in the clutch. A .254 career hitter, he batted .297 in 1962 and .294 in 1960. In the eight-year period 1953-60, he averaged 19 home runs per season, and on Sept. 11, 1955, he hit a home run that stands alone in the 132 years of Braves NL history. In the first game of a doubleheader at Milwaukee against Philadelphia, the Braves entered the bottom of the ninth trailing, 4-0. Johnny Logan led off with a triple and scored on a foul fly by Eddie Mathews, making it 4-1. After Aaron beat out an infield single and George Crowe flied out, Chuck Tanner and Ben Taylor both singled to load the bases. Crandall followed with a game-ending grand slam off Herm Wehmeier.

"They told me only a handful of players had ever done that," said Crandall. "They'd call it a walk-off grand slam today, but no one had thought of that back then!"

Another Braves Hall of Famer, Ernie Johnson, was the winning pitcher in relief.

No other Brave - before or since - has hit



Crandall has liquidated most of his memorabilia, but keeps a modest display with two of his Gold Gloves, and the portrait from his Braves Hall of Fame induction hangs nearby.

a walk-off grand slam. In fact, Crandall's was just the seventh in history. There still have been only 23 of them.

That home run is buried in the record books, but that's not the case of another one Crandall hit. This one came in the eighth inning of Game 7 of the '57 Series. The Braves were winning, 4-0, behind the masterful pitching of Lou Burdette when Crandall padded the lead with a solo homer off the Yankees Tommy Byrne. Burdette

carried that 5-0 lead into the bottom of the ninth, only to have the Yankees load the bases with two outs and dangerous Bill "Moose" Skowron at the plate.

Showron ripped a wicked, one-hopper down the third base line that Mathews backhanded and stepped on the bag to end the Series.

"I didn't think that home run was too important when I hit it," Crandall recalled. "But when Skowron came up with the bases loaded, I was thinking it looked pretty big then."

Had Mathews not made an excellent play to end the game, Crandall's home run might have been very big, indeed.

"I can still see the three of us - Eddie, Lou and me - meeting near the mound at Yankee Stadium after Eddie made that play. It was a tremendous feeling to beat those Yankees, who acted like they didn't think they should ever lose a game," said Crandall, who attended the 50th anniversary reunion of that 1957 team last August in Milwaukee.

Crandall is one of only 12 catchers to be behind the plate for three no-hitters. Only Jason Varitek has caught four. Asked which was the best game he caught, Crandall replied, "Jim Wilson's no-hitter," which came on June 12, 1954. Crandall also caught no-hitters by Lou Burdette and Warren Spahn in 1960.

"Wilson's was my first," said Crandall. "It was against the Phillies, and I remember

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

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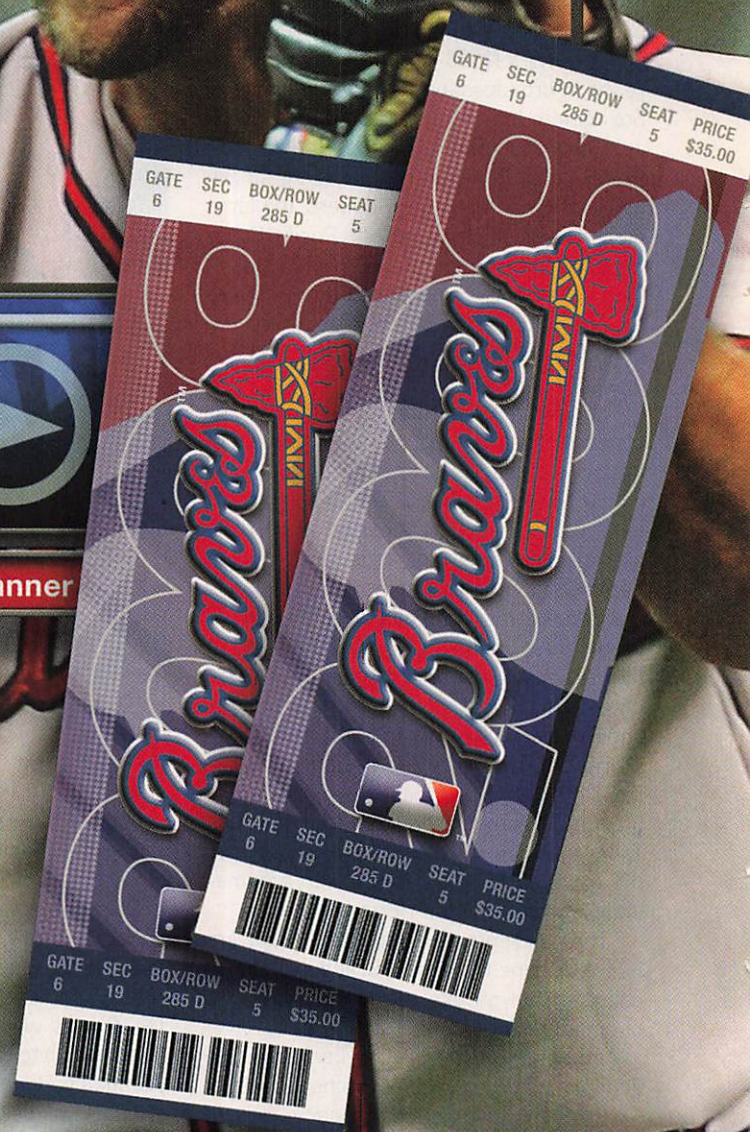
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(Willie) 'Puddin' Head' Jones was their last hitter. Jim's slider had been so good, but I wanted to call a fastball. I called the slider, though, and Puddin' Head lined it over Eddie Mathews at third. It went foul, though, and I thought, 'Oh, boy!' Then I called the fastball, and he grounded to short to end the game [2-0]."

Crandall was born in Ontario, Calif., and raised in Fullerton. Both are in very close proximity to where he now lives.

"I didn't come from anything. We were poor," Crandall said. "But I had a great childhood. My dad was a truck driver, but he had bad eyes and worked in the orange industry in receiving. Of course, everyone was poor in 1938 and '39."

There was no draft of amateur players then, and Crandall was one of the most highly scouted and recruited players of his time. He said everyone thought he would sign with the Dodgers, but he wound up signing with Braves scout Johnny Moore.

"The Dodgers came to where my dad worked, and he told them, 'Why should he sign with a team that has 600 players in its organization?' He's going to sign where he'll get the best chance to play. Johnny Moore charmed my dad. He'd sit on the front porch and talk to him. And that's where I signed. I got a bonus of \$4,000 a year for two years.

On June 17, 1949, Crandall made his big league debut as the youngest player in the majors (19) after a short stint in the minors.

"When they called me up from Evansville, they flew me to Pittsburgh in [owner Lou] Perini's plane," said Crandall. "I called home and told my mother I was going to Boston, and she said, 'What for?' When I told her I had been called up, she screamed. The team was on the road, though. When we got back to Boston, Perini flew in my parents for the weekend series.

"The first game [July 1], I was behind the plate, and my parents were supposed to sit by the dugout. The pitcher threw the first two pitches right down the middle, and Jocko Conlan [Hall of Fame umpire] called them both balls. I asked, 'What was wrong with those?' He told me, 'No busher is going to tell me what's a strike.' Well, I told him he could stick that busher stuff, and he threw me out of the game. I don't even know if my parents had sat down yet, and there I was walking off the field right past them after only two pitches!"

The "busher's" career couldn't go anywhere but up after that - and it certainly did just that.

AROUND BASEBALL

BY KEN ROSENTHAL



PEAVY DEAL NOT LIKELY TO COME SOON, IF AT ALL

THE PADRES likely will wait to explore the trade market for righthander **Jake Peavy** until after **CC Sabathia** (Milwaukee), **A.J. Burnett** (Toronto) and **Derek Lowe** (Dodgers) sign their free-agent contracts. As each new deal is signed, Peavy's contract will look even more reasonable. Peavy is signed for \$56 million over the next four seasons, with a \$22 million option or \$4 million buyout for 2013. He holds a full no-trade clause through 2010.

One general manager says that if he were in position to sign Dodgers outfielder **Manny Ramirez**, he would offer him a two-year deal for between \$25 million and \$30 million per season, with a vesting option for a third year. Ramirez wants at least four years. Several clubs would love to jump into the bidding if the economy depresses his market - imagine Ramirez with the Blue Jays, the A's or (whoa!) the Rays.

Amazing that the Dodgers twice lost outfielder **Shane Victorino** in the Rule 5 draft - and twice were offered him back. The first time, prior to the 2003 season, the Dodgers took back Victorino from the Padres. The second time, prior to the '05 season, they told the Phillies, "No, you keep him." Victorino accepted a minor-league assignment and broke out that year at Triple A.

The Dodgers' interest in Yankees second baseman **Robinson Cano** is sincere, but at what price? Outfielder **Matt Kemp** would be an obvious fit for the Yankees, for whom he could play center field or right field. Whatever the Dodgers do with Kemp - and Ramirez - they likely will need to find a new home for **Juan Pierre**, who is owed \$28.5 million over the next three seasons.

The Yankees shouldn't be confident of landing righthander **Derek Lowe**. Lowe, like any diligent free agent, will entertain bids from both New York teams, but teammates say he has little interest in playing for the Mets or Yankees. Some rival clubs believe that Lowe wants to stay on the West coast. The Braves remain interested.

Not much doubt that the Brewers will exercise their \$10 million option on centerfielder **Mike Cameron**, who turns 36 on Jan. 8. Yes, Cameron had the fourth-highest strikeout rate in the majors, but his .811 on-base/slugging percentage ranked sixth among centerfielders with 500 or more plate appearances - ahead of the Phillies' **Shane Victorino**, ahead of the Rays' **B.J. Upton**.

The Diamondbacks almost certainly will consider trading outfielder **Eric Byrnes**, but some club officials believe that the team's fade after a 21-9 start was attributable, in part, to Byrnes' hamstring troubles. Byrnes struggled while trying to fight through his injuries and did not play after June 30. "The team's identity was defense and baserunning," one club official said. "With him out, the team's overall defense and baserunning went down." Byrnes has a no-trade clause and is owed \$22 million over the next two seasons.

- KEN ROSENTHAL IS A SENIOR WRITER FOR FOXSPORTS.COM

ChopTalk Season's Signings

Holiday Spectacular



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John Smoltz



Hank Aaron

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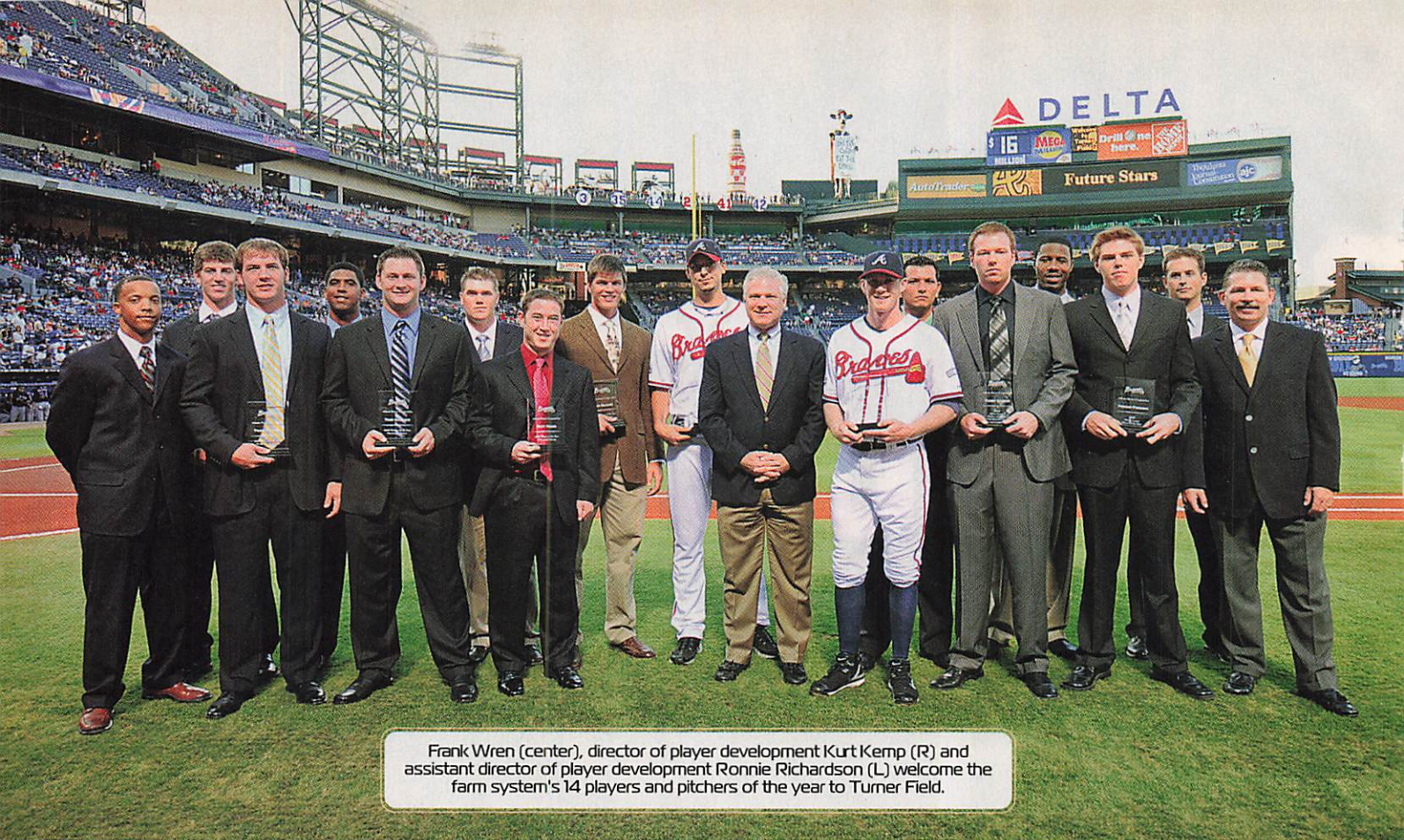
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Frank Wren (center), director of player development Kurt Kemp (R) and assistant director of player development Ronnie Richardson (L) welcome the farm system's 14 players and pitchers of the year to Turner Field.

HELP IS ON THE WAY

14 Top Prospects Receive Early Taste of Turner Field Atmosphere

BY RYAN MCNALLY

TOMMY HANSON is on the field, jumping all around and hugging his teammates in celebration. The Mississippi Braves have just won the Southern League championship. Coming less than three months after Hanson pitched a no-hitter, the championship caps a remarkable season that saw him go 13-8 with a 3.52 ERA and rank fourth among all minor league pitchers in strikeouts. But as it turned out, his highlight reel wasn't complete yet.

On Sept. 22, the Braves honored Hanson and 13 other minor league players for their outstanding seasons. Hanson was the Braves' organizational Pitcher of the Year, with 19-year-old phenom Freddie Freeman capturing organization-wide Player of the Year honors.

Upper-level minor league Players of the Year included Josh Anderson (Triple A), who hit .314 with 42 stolen bases at Richmond; Matt Young (Double A), who had a .384 on-base percentage and stole 30 bases at Mississippi; and Tyler Flowers (advanced A, Myrtle Beach), a 22-year old catcher who hit 17 homers and walked a league-leading 98 times for an impressive .427 OBP.

Pitchers of the Year included Charlie Morton (Triple A), who posted an ERA of 2.05 and limited opposing hitters to a .181 average; Todd Redmond (Double A), who went 13-5 with 133 strikeouts; and Scott Diamond (advanced A, Myrtle Beach), who lost only three games all season, including a 12-2 mark with a 2.79 ERA after moving up from Rome.

The 22-year-old Hanson started the year at Myrtle Beach, where he went 3-1 with a 0.90 ERA. He was quickly called up to Mississippi, joining a staff that included Redmond. After a bumpy start, Hanson threw a no-hitter in late June, and from there, he was on his way to limiting opponents to a minor-league best .175 batting average.

"I was kind of hit or miss when I got to Mississippi, and then I made a couple of grip changes on my breaking stuff, and the no-hitter was really the first game it all clicked," said Hanson. "After that, it just gave me a ton of confidence, and I just rolled with it."

Adding in a second breaking pitch helped the 6-foot-6-inch Hanson roll up a total of 163 strikeouts in 138 innings.

"He added to his repertoire, continued to command his fastball

in the strike zone, and held his velocity at the end of the year," said Kurt Kemp, Braves director of player development. "He was able to step up to a better caliber of hitter and still show his ability to pitch well against those guys."

Hanson is playing in the Arizona Fall League (Mesa Solar Sox), working on a changeup, developing secondary pitches, and getting experience throwing to hitters with Triple-A and major league backgrounds. As for next year, Kemp says Hanson has pitched well enough to put himself in a position for an invitation to major league spring training.

It may be too early to predict when Freeman will be making his way to the big leagues, but after a superb season with Class-A Rome, it may not be long. A first baseman selected in the second round of the '07 draft, Freeman hit .316 with 18 homers and 95 RBIs (fifth in the league), posting a .378 on-base percentage and .521 slugging percentage along the way.

"The biggest keys this year were adjustments and learning, because last year when I was at the Gulf Coast League, they just threw hard, and that's all they could do," said Freeman, who suffered a cracked rib in the final week of the season that went undetected until early October when he was forced to leave the Fall Instructional League.

This year, Freeman discovered that if he got a hit off someone at this level, they would change strategy the next time he

faced them, so he had to constantly make adjustments.

According to Freeman, his personal '08 highlights included making the all-star team and hitting an 11th-inning, go-ahead home run against first-place Asheville. After every game, he'd go over the details of each pitch with his roommate - and Rome Braves Player of the Year - Jason Heyward, a 19-year-old rightfielder.

"Every single day, we'd talk baseball - each at-bat, what we did, how they got us out, how we got them, and how we were going to get them the next time if they got us that day," said Freeman. "I did some things that he picked up, and he did some things that I picked up, and we really helped each other a lot."

Heyward, the Braves' No.-1 pick in the 2007 draft and generally considered the top prospect in the organization, batted .323 at Rome to go with 88 runs scored (fifth in the league) and a .388 on-base percentage. He's from just south of Turner Field in McDonough, Ga.

"This season was something good to work with, a good base," said Heyward. "The all-star game was a chance to go relax, play with a lot of good players, but this whole year was fun."

Both Freeman and Heyward have exhibited poise well beyond their 19 years.

"Any time a player is young and plays up at a level where they're playing against

PITCHER OF YEAR PLAYER OF YEAR

ORGANIZATIONAL

Tommy Hanson (RH)
Freddie Freeman (1B)

RICHMOND

Charlie Morton (RH)
Josh Anderson (OF)

MISSISSIPPI

Todd Redmond (RH)
Matt Young (OF)

MYRTLE BEACH

Scott Diamond (LH)
Tyler Flowers (C)

ROME

Edgar Osuna (LH)
Jason Heyward (OF)

DANVILLE

David Francis (RH)
Jon Gilmore (3B)

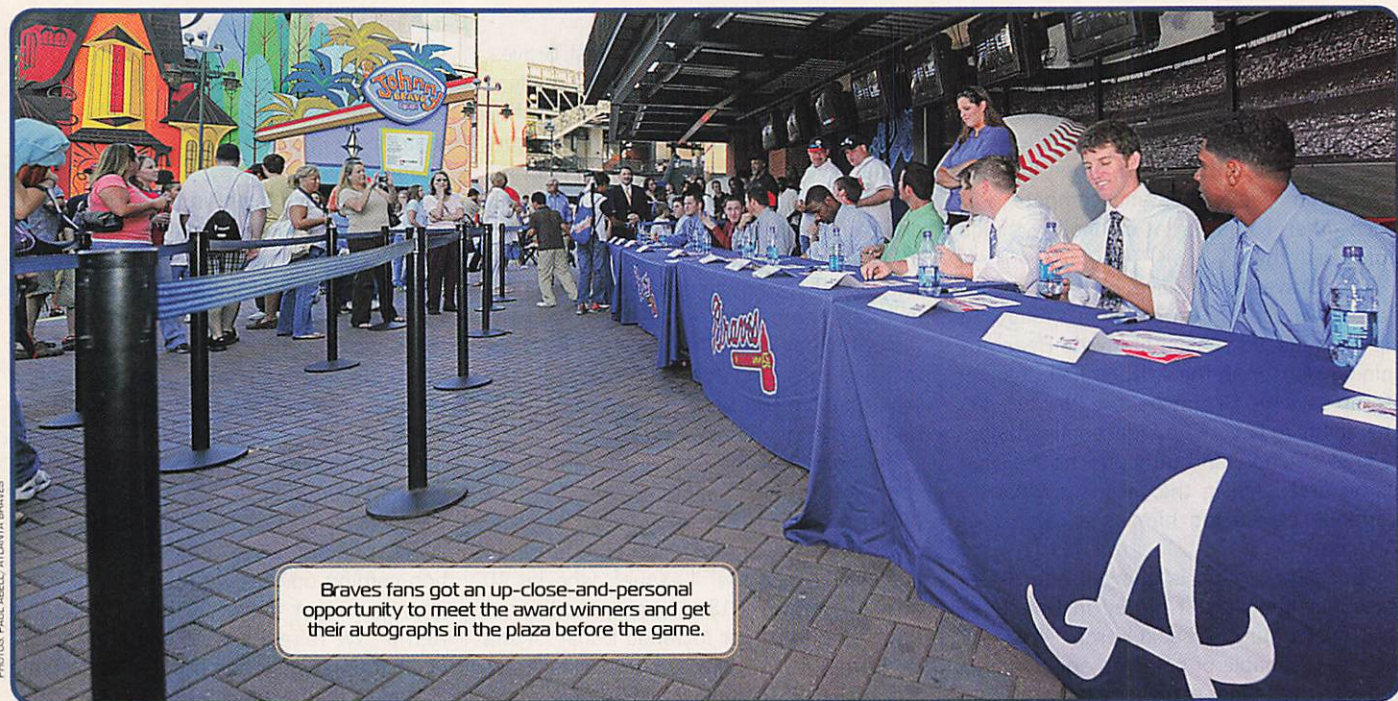
GULF COAST

Zeke Spruill (RH)
Robert Brooks (2B)

DOMINICAN

Edigson Mora (RH)
Alberto Odreman (1B)

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Braves fans got an up-close-and-personal opportunity to meet the award winners and get their autographs in the plaza before the game.

PHOTOS: PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

BRUCE DAL CANTON

1942-2008

BRUCE DAL CANTON, a mainstay in the Atlanta organization since 1982 and one of the most respected and beloved pitching coaches in baseball, died on Oct. 7 at age 66. The only pitching coach in Myrtle Beach Pelicans history, "DC" was diagnosed with cancer on May 16 and had to leave the team to return to his home in Carnegie, Pa., to receive treatment.

"He was a great pitching coach, one of the best you'll ever see at any level," said Pelicans manager Rocket Wheeler, who worked with Dal Canton on the Myrtle Beach coaching staff the past three seasons. "DC was a great teacher and a great person. I learned so much about how to do my job better just by being around him."

Dal Canton had an 11-year career (1967-77) as a major league pitcher, including 1975-76 with the Braves. He was 51-49 overall with 19 saves and a 3.62 ERA for Pittsburgh, Kansas City and the White Sox, as well as Atlanta. As a Brave, he was 5-12 with 4 saves with a 3.46 ERA.

He also was the Braves' major league pitching coach from 1987-90 under managers Chuck Tanner and Russ Nixon,

working with prospects that included Tom Glavine and John Smoltz.

Upon his departure from Myrtle Beach in May, Dal Canton

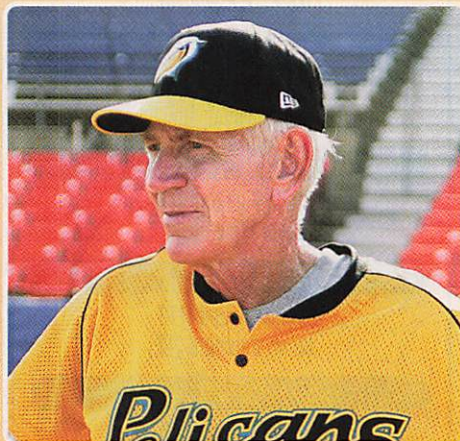
expressed a desire to return before the season ended. In his absence the players wrote his initials, DC, on caps, shoes, gloves and bats, and his name was announced in the starting lineup at BB&T Coastal Field prior to every game.

His coaching career began with the White Sox following his release in June of 1978. He rejoined the Braves' organization in 1982 as Durham's pitching coach. His patient, understated approach led to success on staffs throughout the top three levels of the farm system, including advanced Class A Durham (1982), Danville (1998) and Myrtle Beach (1999-2008), Double-A Savannah (1983) and Greenville (1984, 1994-97), and Triple-A Richmond (1985-86, 1991-93).

A native of California, Pa., Dal Canton held a bachelor's degree in education and a master's degree in

biology. He is survived by his wife, Helene.

- BILL BALLEW



Besides being a long-time minor league coach who tutored some of the best pitchers in Braves history, Dal Canton also pitched in the majors for the Braves (1975-76) and was the big league pitching coach from 1987-90.

players who are older than they are, their maturity is such an important point," said Kemp. "We saw maturity with both Freeman and Heyward. Any time you get good players that play together like that, they not only feed off of each other, but they learn from each other and compete with each other. I think a lot of healthy things come with that."

The Braves also have high hopes for catching prospect Flowers, who is following up his huge '08 season at Myrtle Beach by joining Hanson in the Arizona Fall League. Kemp says the Braves believe Flowers has the ability to become a high-quality major-league catcher, and although he's played some first base in the past, they plan to continue developing him as a catcher in Arizona.

"Each (AFL) club is allowed one A-ball exception that hasn't played in Double A, and Tyler's our guy," said Kemp. "We think he's very capable of going up and competing with the caliber of players that are going

to be playing there."

With the rookie-level Gulf Coast Braves, second baseman Robert Brooks made a noteworthy splash in '08, hitting .329 with a .426 OBP to claim Player of the Year honors at that level. He also showed good speed, with five triples and 12 stolen bases (only one caught stealing) in just 47 games.

"Brooks had a good year for batting average, and that's not an easy league to go hit in," said Kemp. "You're playing in the middle of the day when the heat is at its highest, and those kids get worn down as the year goes on. He went in there and really had a very fine offensive year."

Rounding out the Braves Players of the Year were third baseman Jon Gilmore (advanced rookie Danville), who hit .337, and first baseman Alberto Odreman (Dominican Summer League), who hit 10 home runs in 213 at-bats. Additional Pitchers of the Year included Edgar Osuna (A, Rome), who went 10-5 and struck out 135 in just 125 innings; David Francis (rook-

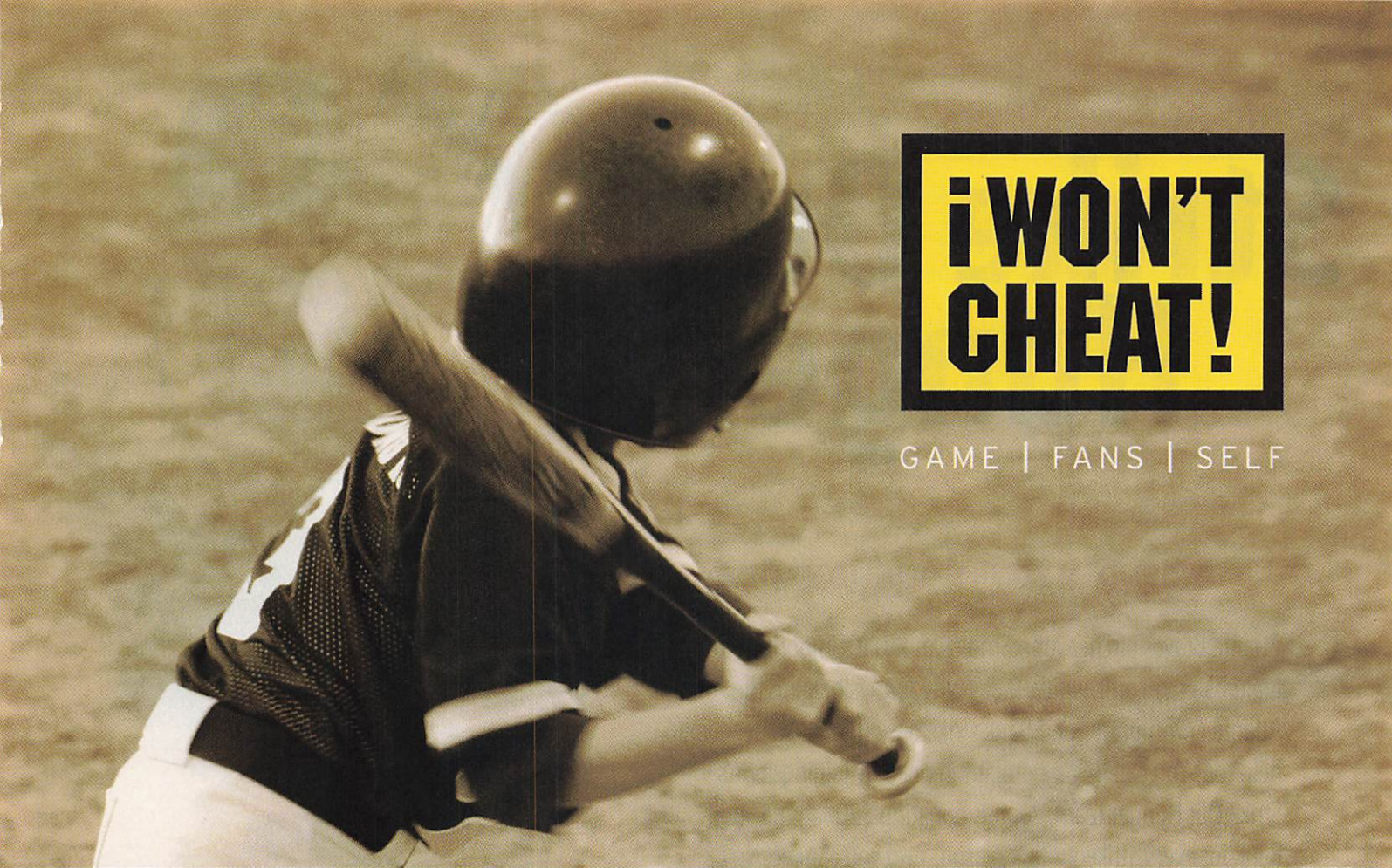
ie, Danville), who posted a 2.35 ERA and struck out 69 in 54 innings; Zeke Spruill (rookie, Gulf Coast), who was 7-0 with a 2.93 ERA; and Edigson Mora, who had a team-leading six wins (Dominican Summer League).

With so much talent in the farm system, help definitely is on the way for the parent club.

"There's a ton of talent at the lower levels," said Hanson. "Every time we go out there, we're trying to do better than the guy before us. We're all doing good and pulling for each other. It's kind of like a friendly competition."

That's good news for Braves fans looking to find something to look forward to after the team's worst record since 1990.

"There a number of kids in the organization coming up that we think can have an impact on our major league club," said Kemp. "We're real excited about the future of what these guys can bring to the Atlanta Braves in the next few years."



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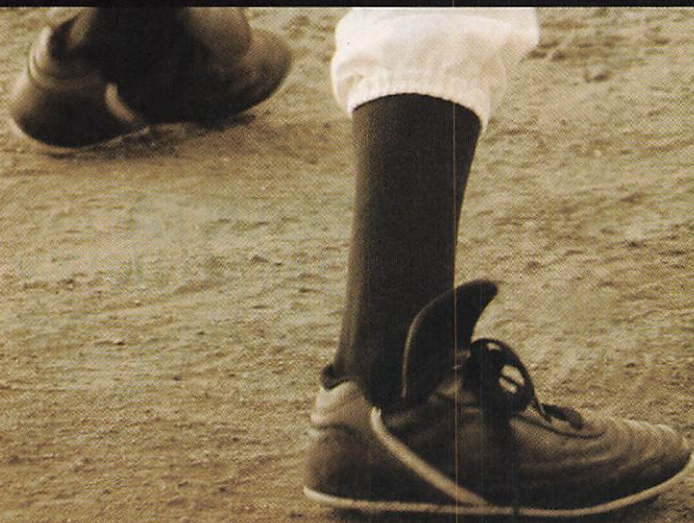
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—Dale Murphy

2 TIME NL MVP, ATLANTA BRAVES

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Official Glove	\$ 500	\$
Official Smoltz Braves Jersey	\$1000	\$
All items are	\$2150	\$

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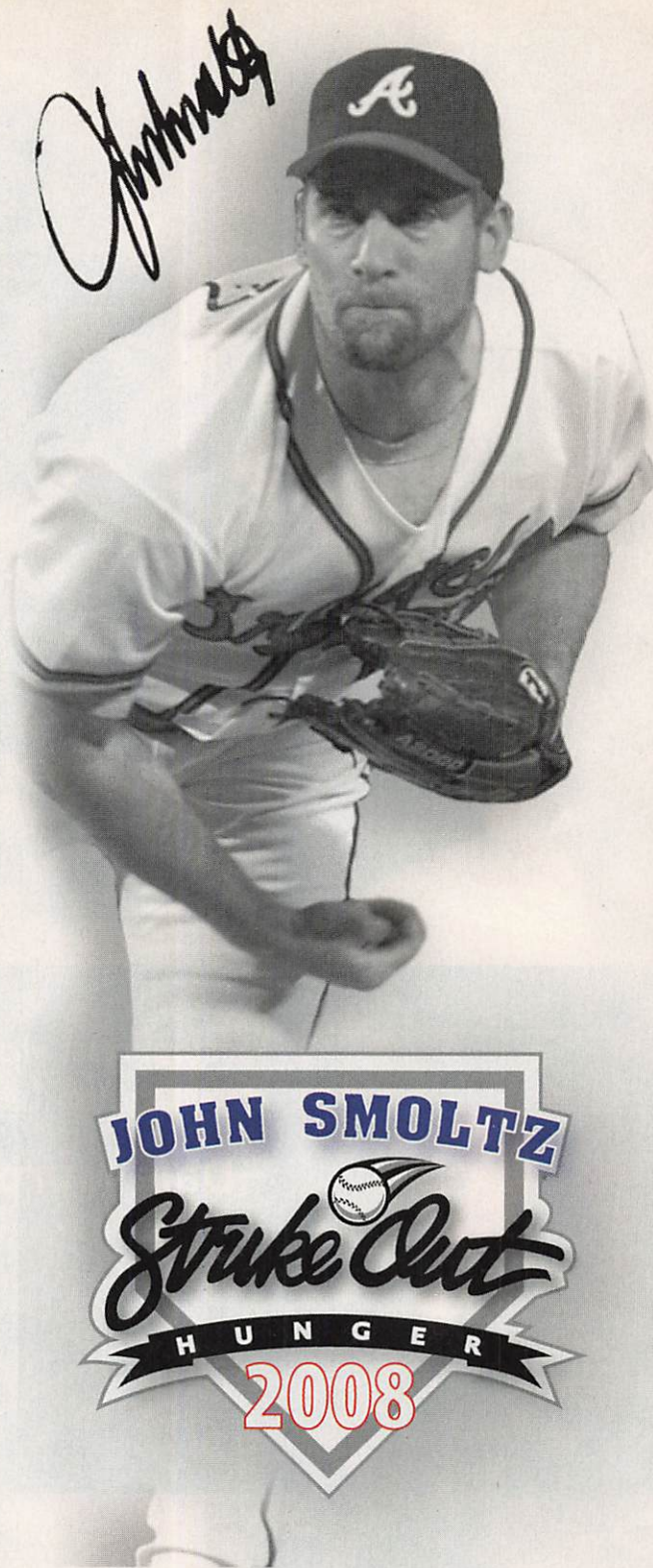
The Strike Out Hunger season begins with the Braves opening home game and ends with the final regular season home game.

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WORST TO FIRST!



EXCITEMENT STILL RINGS FROM MISSISSIPPI'S IMPROBABLE TURNAROUND

BY BILL BALLEW

The Mississippi Braves put a new twist on "worst to first" en route to winning the Double-A Southern League championship. In the process, they generated tremendous excitement among their fan base and gave the club the best promotional platform for next season.

Unlike the Atlanta Braves, who went from "worst" in baseball in 1990 to a World Series appearance in 1991, the M-Braves did their "worst-to-first" act during the season. They started by losing 15 of their first 17 games (.118) - the worst record in all of Double-A ball. They then did a complete reversal that culminated with a 3-2, 10-inning victory over the Carolina Mudcats (Florida Marlins) in the fifth and decisive game of the championship series.

The M-Braves shocked the masses in Pearl, Miss., by winning the championship and delighted the faithful fans at Trustmark Park.

"In every other place I've been during my career in the minors, the fans come out for the promotions and the giveaways," said Mississippi general manager Steve DeSalvo. "Here, the fans come out to see winning baseball."

Despite competition from high school and college football in the immediate vicinity, the M-Braves attracted their loyal legions throughout two playoff series. Flyovers, fireworks and tomahawks helped create an electric atmosphere in the stands, while the players' performances ensured an aura of pandemonium on the diamond.

"We had some of the most loyal fans you will ever see," said manager Phillip Wellman. "There were about 2,500 fans every night, and I told them at the rally the day after we won it that they sounded like 10,000 people. They stood up through every extra-inning game and really helped us pull out the wins."

Wellman addressed his club during the latter half of the season and asked the players how many had played for a title at the professional level. Only a few raised their hands. The manager then revealed that in a quarter-century in the game as a player, coach and manager, he had never been part of a championship winner.

"I was trying to stress to them how few and far between these opportunities are,"



CHAMPIONSHIP ROSTER

Manager: Phillip Wellman. Coaches: Derek Botelho, Franklin Stubbs. Catchers: JC Boscan, Jose Camarena. Infielders: Greg Creek, Javier Guzman, J.C. Holt, Kala Ka'aihue, Robert Marcial, Van Pope. Outfielders: Willie Cabrera, Quentin Davis, Reid Gordecki, Jordan Schafer, Matt Young. Pitchers: Paul Bush, Bryan Dumesnil, Jerome Gamble, Kevin Gunderson, Tommy Hanson, Deunte Heath, Sung Ki Jung, Stephen Marek, Kris Medlen, Todd Redmond, Carlos Sencion, Luis Valdez, Jonny Venters. Inactive: Paul Bennett.

Wellman said. "I told them how long I had been in this game and I didn't have a ring."

He will soon have that ring, though. DeSalvo said that all team members and front office personnel will be receiving rings. Production is already underway, with plans to distribute them to the players and staff during spring training.

Numerous other items and events are being executed on the heels of winning the first Double-A championship in the Atlanta organization since 1997. DeSalvo and public relations manager Nicholas Skinner are putting together a highlights video of the team's season to give to season-ticket holders and sponsors of the club. Brian Byrd, the M-Braves' advertising and design manager, has created a new logo, which will be featured on all printed material, as well as on numerous banners throughout Trustmark Park.

"We're trying to play the championship up every way we can," Skinner said. "We're going to dress up the ballpark a little bit more and get the word out to everyone in the area that we are here to win."

The team has already begun to spread the gospel through every conceivable avenue. For example, on Oct. 4 at the South Carolina-Ole Miss football game in nearby Oxford, the M-Braves had six tents set up on The Grove before and after the game to welcome and inform the masses about Mississippi Braves baseball. A handful of players attended, along with most of the front office staff and several hundred fans, celebrating with a cookout and an appearance on the Ole Miss pre-game radio show, all the while marketing the team for the 2009 season.

Sponsorships and 2009 season ticket sales are already in motion, with the initial reaction much more receptive and productive at this time of the year because of the championship success. Additional ideas are on the drawing board.

"The championship series is the most exciting baseball I have ever seen in all my years in this game," DeSalvo said. "Now I see it as my job to get that message out so that as many people as possible can experience what we have to offer."

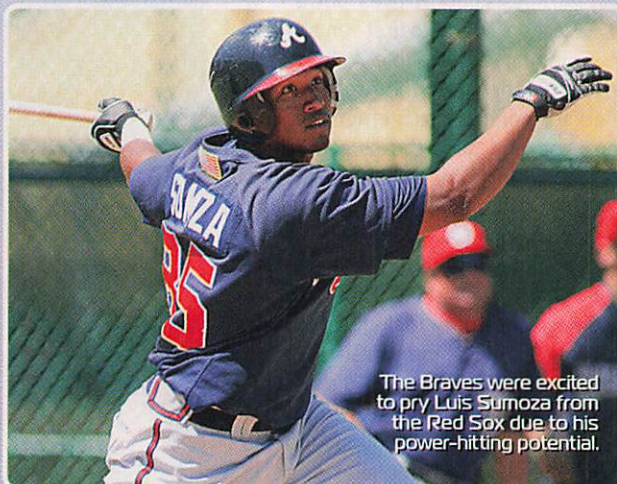


SUMOZA ALLOWING KOTSAY DEAL TO SHOW POTENTIAL IN FLORIDA

WHILE MARK KOTSAY was helping the Red Sox in the American League playoffs, Luis Sumoza, the outfielder the Braves obtained from Boston in exchange for Kotsay on Aug. 27, was impressing with his play in the organization's Fall Instructional League camp at Disney's Wide World of Sports.

The 20-year-old Venezuelan played in five games with Rome during the last week of the season before joining the Braves in Florida. Prior to the trade, Sumoza was hitting .301 with 15 doubles, 11 home runs and 38 RBIs (51 games) for Class-A Lowell (Mass.) of the New York-Penn League. He was second in the league in slugging percentage (.549) and on-base plus slugging (.915) and was tied for second in homers.

"He's been outstanding down here," said Kurt Kemp, the Braves' director of player development. "He's got a great arm with plenty of strength for right field. He's been swinging the bat well. He has a good feel for the game and really goes about his business in the right manner."



The Braves were excited to pry Luis Sumoza from the Red Sox due to his power-hitting potential.

SCOUTS WATCHING the Braves' roster were impressed by the talent on display during Fall Instructional League in Lake Buena Vista, Fla., and Kemp agreed.

"It's a talented group, no question about it," said Kemp. "What we've tried to focus on is the developmental aspects. It's in some ways an extra-credit session in which we identify goals for every player and help them improve their games in those certain areas."

There were 22 pitchers and 22 position players invited for the six-week program that provides newcomers to the organization with an intense introduction to the "Braves' way" of playing, while allowing players who have been in the organization a year or more to work on their skills with extra repetitions against live competition.

There were only a few minor injuries during the first two-thirds of the camp. The most serious was to first baseman Freddie Freeman, who returned home to California on Oct. 8 after he was diagnosed with a cracked rib on his right side. Freeman suffered the injury during the final week of the regular season, but X-rays did not reveal the exact problem until early October.

Instructional League gives the Braves time in a relaxed atmosphere to teach specific skills and indoctrinate the proper approach to the game to players who joined

the organization over the past six months. That group includes a dozen players from the 2008 draft, among them right-handed pitcher Jacob Thompson, who was signed in the fifth round out of the University of Virginia. After signing late, he pitched briefly at Danville and Rome during the final two weeks of the season and has been impressive this fall.

"He's doing a great job and throwing the ball very well," Kemp said. "He's in the same situation as most of our first-year pitchers here. We need to learn what his strengths are and what his pitching style is before we make any changes or adjustments. We're in the process of building a foundation with him so that we can create a good sound mechanical delivery."

Highly regarded right-handed pitcher Julio Teheran has shown no ill effects from shoulder stiffness that limited him to six games and 15 innings this past season at Danville. Kemp admits the Braves were overly cautious when the 18-year-old from Colombia complained of discomfort.

"We had him checked out thoroughly by our doctors, and everything was fine," Kemp said. "We wanted to err on the side of caution. Julio's velocity is back (in the low-to-mid 90s). He's throwing that nasty change-up, and his curveball is improving every

time he goes out on the mound. He's still learning about himself and what he is capable of doing. Once all of that comes together, he has a chance to be very special."

Kemp and the Braves are also pleased with the progress shown by 21-year-old Panamanian outfielder Concepcion Rodriguez. After enduring a disappointing season at Rome in 2007, Rodriguez rebounded with a strong three-week stint back in the South Atlantic League to open 2008, then was promoted to Myrtle Beach, where he hit .280 with 11 home runs and 56 RBIs in 108 games.

"He took the '07 season and put it behind him," Kemp said. "He moved up in late April and was a significant contributor to that Myrtle Beach team. He's made some nice physical gains. His body has filled out, and he's getting stronger."

ARIZONA FALL LEAGUE

The Braves have six farmhands - three pitchers and three position players - getting extra work in the prestigious Arizona Fall League, where they're playing under Myrtle Beach manager Rocket Wheeler for the Mesa Solar Sox.

Wheeler has previously managed five of the players, including pitchers Deunte Heath and Tommy Hanson and catcher



KRIS MEDLEN

Tyler Flowers this year at Myrtle Beach. Third baseman Van Pope, pitcher Stephen Marek and leftfielder Matt Young round out the Braves' contingent.

ALOHA!

The Braves have three players in Hawaii Winter Baseball, a league that consists mostly of players who have competed at the advanced Class A and Double-A levels. First baseman Kala Ka'aihue, a native of Hawaii, and pitchers Jonny Venters and Michael Broadway are playing with the Honolulu Sharks.

Ka'aihue has received the most attention among the three Atlanta farmhands. The power-hitting first baseman has struggled mightily the past two Aprils, and the Braves are hoping the additional playing time will enable him to get off to a faster start next spring.

PROSPECT RANKINGS

Several Atlanta farmhands were named on Baseball America magazine's annual top 20 prospects lists that cover each of the leagues in the minors.

The Brave players and their rankings in the full-season leagues include: Richmond pitcher Charlie Morton (9th) and outfielder Brandon Jones (17th) in the Triple-A International League; Mississippi pitcher Tommy Hanson (9th) and outfielder Jordan Schafer (13th) in the Double-A Southern League; Myrtle Beach outfielder Gorkys Hernandez (3rd), catcher Tyler Flowers (12th), and shortstop Brandon Hicks (13th) in the advanced Class A Carolina League; and Rome outfielders Jason Heyward (2nd) and Cody Johnson (20th), first baseman Freddie Freeman (10th), and pitchers Cole Rohrbough (13th) and Jeff Locke (14th) in the Class A South Atlantic League.

In the short-season leagues, pitchers Randall Delgado (6th), Craig Kimbrel (14th) and Paul Clemens (15th) and third baseman Jon Gilmore (11th) were recognized from Danville in the Appalachian League, and pitcher Zeke Spruill (17th) was the lone Brave named in the Gulf Coast League.

NOTE

 Pitcher Matthew Small was suspended for 50 games by Major League Baseball after testing positive for an amphetamine, considered a banned performance-enhancing drug.

THE MOVE TO STARTING HELPED ME SLOW DOWN

THE 2008 SEASON was one of those years that rarely happen in baseball. Individually, I made several big starts down the stretch. I also was able to pitch the game in which we clinched the Southern Division in the Southern League and pitched again and did well in the playoffs.

From a team standpoint, I had the most fun I've ever had in pro ball. We went from winning six games in April to winning the whole thing. It was a great story, and I feel fortunate to have been a part of it.

When I think back on the season, I keep going back to the time when we struggled. That makes you a much stronger player. It tests your will to win and your will to keep playing and do well. Everyone on the team went through that in the beginning, and I believe that stretch made us want to win even more.

If you take pride in what you do on the field, there's no way you want to go through 140 games of losing. As a team, we started executing, and our pitching, particularly once we got Tommy (Hanson) and Deunte (Heath from Myrtle Beach), came up huge. We started focusing on doing the small things the right way, and everything started to fall into place.

I began the season in the bullpen and did not have a lot of success. I was still throwing strikes, but for some reason, I was getting hit around. I was missing my spots, and my ERA was pretty high. I had never struggled like that.

When I moved to the rotation in early June, it helped me slow down a little bit. I know that saying relieving is like a sprint and starting is like a marathon is a cliché, but that's the way I approached it. Being a starter made me focus on throwing one pitch at a time and concentrate on hitting my spots. I also started pitching off my fastball a lot more instead of trying to trick batters.

My adrenaline really kicked in toward the end of the season. All of our games throughout the playoffs were really tight, which meant every pitch was so important. I know I pitched well in the post-season, but everyone on our team really came through in crucial moments. We built confidence in one another throughout the season and entered the playoffs expecting to win.

Things are also going well in the Arizona Fall League. I pitched last year in Hawaii Winter Baseball, so I'm a little used to the extended work. I saw the first day out here that this group of players really represents the best of the best. I've played with and against many of these guys, so it's a great situation to work on a few things.

The big thing for me is to stay aggressive and prove to everyone that I can pitch. I'm really not trying to change anything. I'm working on pitching off my fastball and making sure my off-speed pitches are where they need to be.

While I'm happy with the way everything has gone this year, my dream remains to get to the big leagues. That's been my dream for my entire life. Starting is a lot of fun and probably the role in which I feel most comfortable. But relieving is fine, too, and a big part of the game.

I absolutely love playing this game, so whatever it takes for me to get to the big leagues, I'm happy to do it.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Braves' 10th-round draft pick in 2006, Kris Medlen has made rapid progress through the Atlanta organization over the past two years. He shifted from relieving to starting two months into last season at Double-A Mississippi and wound up playing a key role in the M-Braves' Southern League championship. The 23-year-old righthander, who was 7-8 with one save and a 3.52 ERA at Mississippi where he averaged 9 strikeouts and just 2 walks per 9 innings, is currently pitching in the Arizona Fall League with the Mesa Solar Sox.

“ **BEING A STARTER MADE ME FOCUS ON THROWING ONE PITCH AT A TIME AND CONCENTRATE ON HITTING MY SPOTS.** ”

FARM LEADERS



HITTING



BATTING AVERAGE (MIN. 2.7 PA/GAME)

Robert Brooks	Gulf Coast	.329
Freddie Freeman	Rome	.316
Jason Heyward	Rome/Myrtle Beach	.316
Josh Anderson	Richmond	.314
Barbaro Canizares	Richmond	.300
Chais Fuller	Danville	.295
Jon Gilmore	Danville/Rome	.294
Joel Campusano	Danville	.291
Travis Adair	Gulf Coast	.289
Matt Young	Mississippi	.289

HOME RUNS

Cody Johnson	Rome	26
Jason Perry	Richmond/Mississippi	23
Ernesto Mejia	Myrtle Beach	21
Brandon Hicks	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	20
Scott Thorman	Richmond	19
Eric Campbell	Myrtle Beach	19
Freddie Freeman	Rome	18
Tyler Flowers	Myrtle Beach	17
Willie Cabrera	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	16
Travis Jones	Myrtle Beach	16
Jon Mark Owings	Myrtle Beach	16

RBIs

Freddie Freeman	Rome	95
Ernesto Mejia	Myrtle Beach	93
Cody Johnson	Rome	89
Tyler Flowers	Myrtle Beach	88
Willie Cabrera	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	80
Travis Jones	Myrtle Beach	78
Concepcion Rodriguez	Rome/Myrtle Beach	69
Eric Campbell	Myrtle Beach	67
Jason Perry	Mississippi/Richmond	66
Jon Mark Owings	Myrtle Beach	63

RUNS

Ernesto Mejia	Myrtle Beach	93
Jason Heyward	Rome/Myrtle Beach	91
Willie Cabrera	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	90
Travis Jones	Myrtle Beach	81
Josh Anderson	Richmond	77
Brandon Hicks	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	77
Diory Hernandez	Mississippi/Richmond	75
Matt Young	Mississippi	74
Tyler Flowers	Myrtle Beach	72
Jason Perry	Mississippi/Richmond	72

STOLEN BASES

Josh Anderson	Richmond	42
Matt Young	Mississippi	30
J.C. Holt	Mississippi/Richmond	29
Cole Miles	Rome	28
Carl Loadenthal	Mississippi/Richmond	23
Brent Lillibridge	Richmond	23

Gorkys Hernandez	Myrtle Beach	20
Travis Jones	Myrtle Beach	17
Reid Gorecki	Mississippi/Richmond	17
Jason Heyward	Rome/Myrtle Beach	15

ON BASE PCT. (MIN. 250 PA)

Tyler Flowers	Myrtle Beach	.427
Kala Ka'aihue	Mississippi	.417
Jason Heyward	Rome/Myrtle Beach	.381
Jordan Schafer	Mississippi	.378
Freddie Freeman	Rome	.378
Eric Campbell	Myrtle Beach	.362
Travis Jones	Myrtle Beach	.361
Josh Anderson	Richmond	.358
Barbaro Canizares	Richmond	.353
Chris Shehan	Danville	.350

DOUBLES

Ernesto Mejia	Myrtle Beach	47
Willie Cabrera	Myrtle Beach/ Mississippi	33
Freddie Freeman	Rome	33
Tyler Flowers	Myrtle Beach	32
Travis Jones	Myrtle Beach	29
Jon Mark Owings	Myrtle Beach	29
Jason Heyward	Rome/Myrtle Beach	29
Barbaro Canizares	Richmond	28
Concepcion Rodriguez	Rome/Myrtle Beach	28
Adam Coe	Rome	28

TRIPLES

J.C. Holt	Richmond/Mississippi	9
Brent Lillibridge	Richmond	7
Greg Creek	Mississippi	7
Freddie Freeman	Rome	7
Jordan Schafer	Mississippi	6
Jason Heyward	Rome/Myrtle Beach	6
L.V. Ware	Danville	6
Gorkys Hernandez	Myrtle Beach	6
Cole Miles	Rome	5
Robert Brooks	Gulf Coast	5
Ernesto Mejia	Myrtle Beach	5
Jon Mark Owings	Myrtle Beach	5
Concepcion Rodriguez	Rome/Myrtle Beach	5

WALKS

Tyler Flowers	Myrtle Beach	98
Kala Ka'aihue	Mississippi	88
Travis Jones	Myrtle Beach	77
Matt Young	Mississippi	68
J.C. Holt	Richmond/Mississippi	53
Brandon Hicks	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	52
Eric Campbell	Myrtle Beach	50
Jordan Schafer	Mississippi	49
Gorkys Hernandez	Myrtle Beach	48
Brandon Jones	Richmond	46

SLUGGING PCT. (MIN. 235 ABS)

Freddie Freeman	Rome	.521
Jason Perry	Mississippi/Richmond	.507
Ernesto Mejia	Myrtle Beach	.505
Tyler Flowers	Myrtle Beach	.494
Jon Mark Owings	Myrtle Beach	.480
Cody Johnson	Rome	.479
Jason Heyward	Rome/Myrtle Beach	.473
Jordan Schafer	Mississippi	.471
Brandon Hicks	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	.467
Scott Thorman	Richmond	.465

PITCHING**ERA** (MIN. 0.8 IP/G)

David Francis	Danville/Gulf Coast	2.35
Tommy Hanson	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	2.41
Casey Hodges	Danville	2.47
Scott Diamond	Rome/Mississippi	2.89
Randall Delgado	Danville	3.13
Kyle Cofield	Myrtle Beach	3.26
Ryne Reynoso	Myrtle Beach	3.38
Edgar Osuna	Rome	3.38
Todd Redmond	Mississippi	3.52
Kris Medlen	Mississippi	3.52

WINS

Scott Diamond	Rome/Myrtle Beach	15
Deunte Heath	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	13
James Parr	Mississippi/Richmond	13
Todd Redmond	Mississippi	13
Tommy Hanson	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	11
Ryne Reynoso	Myrtle Beach	10
Edgar Osuna	Rome	10
Jonathon Rouwenhorst	Richmond	9
Kyle Cofield	Myrtle Beach	8
Zeke Spruill	Gulf Coast	7

STRIKEOUTS

Tommy Hanson	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	163
Edgar Osuna	Rome	135
Todd Redmond	Mississippi	133
James Parr	Mississippi/Rome	125
Scott Diamond	Rome/Myrtle Beach	123
Kris Medlen	Mississippi	120
Jeff Locke	Rome	113
Ryne Reynoso	Myrtle Beach	105
Deunte Heath	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	99
Eric Barrett	Rome	92

INNINGS

Todd Redmond	Mississippi	166.1
Scott Diamond	Rome/Myrtle Beach	152.2
James Parr	Mississippi/Richmond	150.2
Deunte Heath	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	150.1
Jeff Locke	Rome	139.2
Tommy Hanson	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	138.0
Ryne Reynoso	Myrtle Beach	131.1
Edgar Osuna	Rome	125.1
Kris Medlen	Mississippi	120.1
Jonathon Rouwenhorst	Richmond	112.2

WHIP (WALKS + HITS PER IP) (MIN. 25 IP)

Paul Bush	Gulf Coast/Mississippi	0.52
Craig Kimbrel	Danville/Rome/Myrtle Beach	0.88
Charlie Morton	Richmond	0.99
Santos Rodriguez	Gulf Coast	1.00
David Francis	Danville	1.02
Casey Hodges	Danville	1.05
Brett Butts	Myrtle Beach	1.14
Thomas Palica	Rome	1.14
Bryan Dumesnil	Myrtle Beach	1.16
Todd Redmond	Mississippi	1.18

OPPONENTS BATTING AVG. (MIN. 25 IP)

Craig Kimbrel	Danville/Rome/Myrtle Beach	.131
Santos Rodriguez	Gulf Coast	.155
Paul Bush	Gulf Coast/Mississippi	.160
Tommy Hanson	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	.175
Bryan Dumesnil	Myrtle Beach	.175
Charlie Morton	Richmond	.181
David Francis	Danville	.203
Luis Valdez	Mississippi	.208
Zach Schreiber	Richmond	.209
Thomas Palica	Rome	.210

SAVES

Luis Valdez	Mississippi	28
Bryan Dumesnil	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	13
Kevin Gunderson	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	13
Jorge Julio	Richmond	13
Brett Butts	Myrtle Beach	10
Craig Kimbrel	Danville/Rome	10
Thomas Palica	Rome	8
Nick Fellman	Myrtle Beach	8
Zack Schreiber	Richmond	6
Sung Ki Jung	Mississippi	6
Matt Small	Danville	6

WALKS PER 9 IP (MIN. 20 IP)

Richard Sullivan	Rome/Danville	0.66
Michael Broadway	Rome	1.65
Todd Redmond	Mississippi	1.79
Zeke Spruill	Gulf Coast	1.80
Brian Lawrence	Richmond	1.99
Ferdin Tejeda	Myrtle Beach	1.99
Dimaster Delgado	Gulf Coast	2.04
Casey Hodges	Danville	2.08
Kris Medlen	Mississippi	2.10
Chris Vines	Myrtle Beach	2.20



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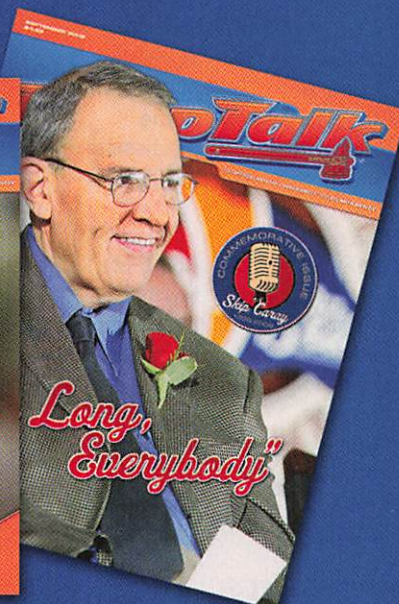
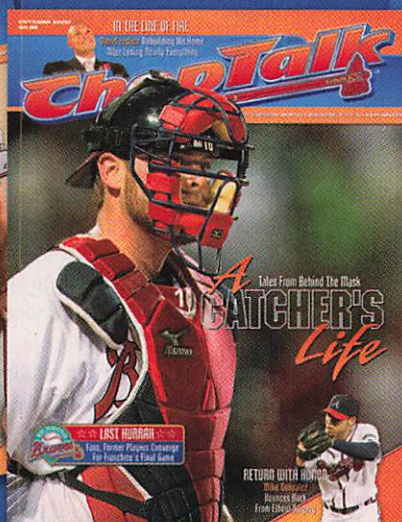
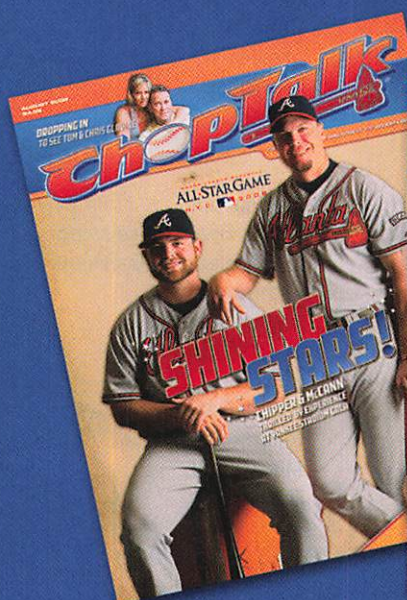


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April 2005 Starting Rotation
May 2005 Andruw Jones
June 2005 Tim Hudson
July 2005 Kyle Davies
August 2005 Johnson & Langerhans
September 2005 Jeff Francoeur
October 2005 Andruw Jones
November 2005 Brian McCann
December 2005 Andruw Jones
January 2006 Edgar Renteria
February 2006 Niekro, Aaron, Lemaster
March 2006 LaRoche Family
April 2006 Andruw, Smoltz, Chipper
May 2006 Chris Reitsma

June 2006 Francoeur's Slam
July 2006 Edgar Renteria
August 2006 Brian McCann
September 2006 Bob Wickman
October 2006 John Smoltz
November 2006 Bobby Cox
December 2006 Jeff Francoeur
January 2007 Rafael Soriano
February 2007 Spring Training
March 2007 Mike Gonzalez
April 2007 Andruw Jones (Sold Out)
May 2007 Hubbard & Johnson (Sold Out)
June 2007 John Smoltz
July 2007 Diaz & Harris

August 2007 Edgar Renteria
September 2007 Mark Teixeira
October 2007 Jeff Francoeur
November 2007 Chipper Jones
December 2007 John Smoltz
January 2008 Tom Glavine
February 2008 Tim Hudson
March 2008 Mark Kotsay
April 2008 Teixeira & Jones
May 2008 Brian McCann
June 2008 Jair Jurrjens
July 2008 Chipper Jones
August 2008 McCann & Jones
September 2008 Skip Caray
October 2008 Brian McCann

TICKET INFO

The Braves had not announced 2009 ticket information at press time. However, deposits of \$100 per seat are being accepted - not only for full season tickets, but also for half-season, weekend and 20-game plans at braves.com. Deposits also are being taken for group seats, suites and hospitality area space.

Due to the anticipated demand for tickets to see the Yankees [June 23-25] and Red Sox [June 26-28] at Turner Field, there's also a signup page at braves.com for the opportunity to be in a drawing for the chance to buy tickets to these games. The only way to guarantee tickets to the Red Sox and Yankees games is to purchase a ticket plan. Call (404) 577-9100 for additional information.



SPRING TRAINING

At press time, no ticket or schedule information was available for Braves spring training at Disney's Wide World of Sports complex in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. Watch future issues of ChopTalk or call (407) 939-GAME [4263] for information or visit disneyworldsports.disney.go.com or braves.com.

MUSEUM & TOUR INFO

The Ivan Allen Jr. Braves Museum features more than 500 Braves artifacts that trace the team's history from its beginnings in Boston (1871-1952) to Milwaukee (1953-65) to Atlanta (1966-present). It is located on the northwest side of Turner Field at aisle 134. The museum opens two and a half hours before each game and closes in the middle of the seventh inning. The museum is open year-round and is the starting point of one-hour guided tours of Turner Field. Tours leave on the hour.

Tour reservations are not necessary for individuals or groups of less than 20 people. Tickets can be purchased the day of the tour at the main ticket window. Free parking in the Green lot.

Admission to the museum during games is one token (\$2) and \$5 on non-game days. Tour tickets are \$12 for adults, \$7 for children and \$10 for groups of 20 or more. Walk-up tickets can be purchased at the ticket window. Groups of 20 or more and school groups must make reservations two weeks in advance by calling (404) 614-2311.

HOURS OF OPERATION

OCTOBER - MARCH

Monday - Saturday

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

DEC. 23-JAN. 3

CLOSED

APRIL - OCTOBER

Monday - Saturday

9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Sunday

1 - 3 p.m.

TOUR TICKETS

ADULTS	\$12
CHILDREN 13 and Under	\$7
MILITARY	\$7
GROUP	\$10

SCHOOL GROUP PRICES

CHILDREN	\$5
ADULTS	\$7

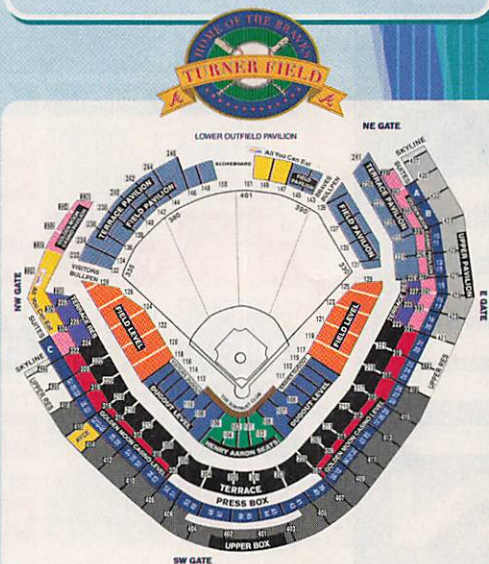
*Subject to change
Tours not available when the Braves have afternoon home games



GIVE A GIFT CARD

Braves Gift Cards are available in denominations from \$25 to \$250 and can be used to purchase Tickets, Concessions and Merchandise.

To purchase Gift Cards or to obtain more information, visit Braves.com or the Braves Clubhouse Store at CNN Center [call 404-523-5854].



2009 SCHEDULE

GAME TIMES, BROADCAST INFO TO BE ANNOUNCED.
TENTATIVE; SUBJECT TO CHANGE
FOR SEASON, GROUP AND SUITE TICKET INFORMATION CALL (404) 577-9100

APRIL							Braves		HOME	AWAY
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY				
			1	2	3	4				
5	6 1:05 PM SEASON OPENER PHI	7	8 7:05 PM PHI	9 7:05 PM PHI	10 HOME OPENER WSH	11 WSH				
12 WSH	13	14 FLA	15 FLA	16 FLA	17 7:05 PM PIT	18 12:35 PM PIT				
19 1:35 PM PIT	20 WSH	21 WSH	22 WSH	23	24 CIN	25 CIN				
26 CIN	27 STL	28 STL	29 STL	30						
MAY							Braves		HOME	AWAY
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY				
					1 HOU	2 HOU				
3 HOU	4 NYM	5 NYM	6 FLA	7 FLA	8 7:05 PM PHI	9 7:05 PM PHI				
10 1:35 PM PHI	11 7:10 PM NYM	12 7:10 PM NYM	13 1:10 PM NYM	14	15 ARI	16 ARI				
17 ARI	18 COL	19 COL	20 COL	21 COL	22 TOR	23 TOR				
24 TOR	25 SF	26 SF	27 SF	28 ARI	29 ARI	30 ARI				
31 ARI										
JUNE							Braves		HOME	AWAY
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY				
	1	2 CHC	3 CHC	4 CHC	5 MIL	6 MIL				
7 MIL	8 PIT	9 PIT	10 PIT	11 PIT	12 7:05 PM BAL	13 7:05 PM BAL				
14 1:35 PM BAL	15	16 CIN	17 CIN	18 CIN	19 BOS	20 BOS				
21 BOS	22	23 NYY	24 NYY	25 NYY	26 BOS	27 BOS				
28 BOS	29	30 PHI								

2009 SCHEDULE

JULY



HOME

AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 PHI	2 PHI	3 WAS	4 WAS
5 WAS	6 CHI	7 CHI	8 CHI	9 COL	10 COL	11 COL
12 COL	13	14 ST. LOUIS ALL-STAR GAME	15	16 NYM	17 MYM	18 NYM
19 NYM	20 SF	21 SF	22 SF	23 SF	24 8:05 PM MIL	25 7:05 PM MIL
26 2:05 PM MIL	27	28 FLA	29 FLA	30 FLA	31 LA	

AUGUST



HOME

AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 LA
2 LA	3 SD	4 SD	5 SD	6 10:10 PM LA	7 10:10 PM LA	8 LA
9 LA	10	11 WAS	12 WAS	13	14 PHI	15 PHI
16 PHI	17	18 7:10 PM NYM	19 7:10 PM NYM	20 7:10 PM NYM	21 FLA	22 FLA
23 FLA	24	25 SD	26 SD	27 SD	28 PHI	29 7:05 PM PHI
30 1:35 PM PHI	31 FLA					

SEPT./OCT.



HOME

AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 FLA	2 FLA	3 FLA	4 CIN	5 CIN
6 CIN	7	8 HOU	9 HOU	10 HOU	11 8:15 PM STL	12 7:15 PM STL
13 2:15 PM STL	14	15 NYM	16 NYM	17 NYM	18 PHI	19 PHI
20 PHI	21 7:10 PM NYM	22 7:10 PM NYM	23 7:10 PM NYM	24	25 WAS	26 WAS
27 WAS	28 FLA	29 FLA	30 FLA	1 WAS	2 WAS	3 WAS
4 WAS						

INDIVIDUAL STATS



FINAL



	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	TB	BB	SO	SB	CS	OBP	SLG	E
BATTERS																	
JONES	.364	128	439	82	160	24	1	22	75	252	90	61	4	0	.470	.574	13
RIGHT	.394		155		61	9	1	5	23	87	26	17			.478	.561	
LEFT	.349		284		99	15	0	17	52	165	64	44			.466	.581	
PRADO	.320	78	228	36	73	18	4	2	33	105	21	29	3	1	.377	.461	6
MCCANN	.301	145	509	68	153	42	1	23	87	266	57	64	5	0	.373	.523	9
ANDERSON	.294	40	136	21	40	7	1	3	12	58	8	33	10	1	.338	.426	2
INFANTE	.293	96	317	45	93	24	3	3	40	132	22	44	0	1	.338	.416	10
KOTSAY	.289	88	318	39	92	17	3	6	37	133	25	34	2	3	.340	.418	0
ESCOBAR	.288	136	514	71	148	24	2	10	60	206	59	62	2	5	.366	.401	16
JOHNSON	.287	150	547	86	157	39	6	12	69	244	52	113	11	6	.349	.446	14
PENA	.286	14	14	3	4	1	0	0	0	5	1	2	0	0	.333	.357	0
RIGHT	.333		3		1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0			.500	.333	
LEFT	.273		11		3	1	0	0	0	4	0	2			.273	.364	
TEIXEIRA	.283	103	381	63	108	27	0	20	78	195	65	70	0	0	.390	.512	2
RIGHT	.269		130		35	6	0	7	31	62	26	21			.395	.477	
LEFT	.291		251		73	21	0	13	47	133	39	49			.388	.530	
JONES, B.	.267	41	116	16	31	10	1	1	17	46	7	28	1	0	.312	.397	0
BLANCO	.251	144	430	52	108	14	4	1	38	133	74	99	13	5	.366	.309	2
NORTON	.246	111	171	27	42	10	0	7	31	73	31	40	0	0	.361	.427	2
RIGHT	.163		49		8	2	0	3	9	19	8	17			.281	.388	
LEFT	.279		122		34	8	0	4	22	54	23	23			.393	.443	
DIAZ	.244	43	135	9	33	2	0	2	14	41	3	32	4	2	.264	.304	1
FRANCOEUR	.239	155	599	70	143	33	3	11	71	215	39	111	0	1	.294	.359	4
KOTCHMAN	.237	43	152	18	36	4	1	2	20	48	18	16	0	0	.331	.316	0
GOTAY	.235	88	102	10	24	5	0	2	8	35	13	32	1	1	.322	.343	2
RIGHT	.154		26		4	0	0	0	0	4	5	11			.290	.153	
LEFT	.263		76		20	5	0	2	8	31	8	21			.333	.408	
LILLIBRIDGE	.200	29	80	9	16	6	1	1	8	27	3	23	2	0	.238	.338	6
SAMMONS	.148	23	54	2	8	0	0	1	4	11	5	12	0	0	.220	.204	0
PERRY	.118	4	17	0	2	0	1	0	1	4	0	4	0	0	.118	.235	0
MILLER	.083	31	60	4	5	0	0	1	5	8	5	15	0	0	.152	.133	3
ATLANTA																	
OPPONENTS	.270	162	5,604	753	1,514	316	33	130	721	2,286	618	1,023	58	27	.345	.408	107
	.263	162	5,480	778	1,439	325	42	156	741	2,316	586	1,076	113	35	.336	.423	100

PINCH-HITTERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) C. Jones (.667-4-1-4), Johnson (.400-4-1-6), Diaz (.375-3-0-0), Pena (.308-4-0-0), Norton (.304-17-3-17), McCann (.273-3-0-0), Prado (.267-4-1-7), Gotay (.262-17-1-5), Francoeur (.250-1-0-0), Miller (.250-1-1-2), Anderson (.200-1-0-0), Kotsay (.200-1-0-0), Infante (.182-2-0-4), Blanco (.125-1-0-0), B. Jones (.000-0-0-0), Escobar (.000-0-0-0), Kotchman (.000-0-0-0), Sammons (.000-0-0-0), Lillibridge (.000-0-0-0), Glavine (.000-0-0-0), Reyes (.000-0-0-0), **TEAM (.265-63-8-45)**.

PITCHERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) Parr (.250-2-0-0), Bennett (.222-2-0-1), Carlyle (.222-2-0-0), Hampton (.208-5-0-4), Campillo (.178-8-0-2), Hudson (.146-6-0-2), Reyes (.133-4-0-2), Glavine (.105-2-0-1), Jurrjens (.103-6-0-0), Morton (.059-1-0-0), James (.000-0-0-0), Smoltz (.000-0-0-1), Acosta (.000-0-0-0), Boyer (.000-0-0-0), Gonzalez (.000-0-0-0), Nunez (.000-0-0-0), **STAFF (.133-38-0-13)**.

BATTING KEY: Batting average, SLG-Slugging percentage, OBP-On-base percentage, G-Games, AB-At-bats, R-Runs, H-Hits, 2B-Doubles, 3B-Triples, HR-Home runs, RBI-Runs batted in, TB-Total bases, BB-Walks, SO-Strikeouts, SB-Stolen bases, CS-Caught stealing, E-Errors

PITCHING KEY: W-L-Wins-Losses, ERA-Earned run average, GS-Starts, GF-Games finished, SV-Saves, IP-Innings pitched, HB-Hit batters, WP-Wild pitches, OBA-Opponents' batting average.

	W-L	ERA	G	GS	GF	SV	IP	H	R	ER	HR	HB	BB	SO	WP	OBA
PITCHERS																
STOCKMAN	0-0	0.00	6	0	4	0	7.1	2	0	0	0	1	4	9	1	.087
JULIO	3-0	0.73	12	0	5	0	12.1	9	1	1	0	1	8	19	3	.200
MOYLAN	0-1	1.59	7	0	2	1	5.2	5	1	1	1	1	1	5	0	.217
SMOLTZ	3-2	2.57	6	5	0	0	28	25	8	8	2	0	8	36	2	.229
SORIANO	0-1	2.57	14	0	5	3	14	7	5	4	1	1	9	16	1	.149
HUDSON	11-7	3.17	23	22	0	0	142	125	53	50	11	2	40	85	3	.239
ACOSTA	3-5	3.57	46	0	22	3	53	48	25	21	7	1	26	31	5	.247
CARLYLE	2-0	3.59	45	0	5	0	62.2	52	26	25	5	1	26	59	4	.228
JURRJENS	13-10	3.68	31	31	0	0	188.1	188	87	77	11	4	70	139	3	.260
OHMAN	4-1	3.68	83	0	16	1	58.2	51	27	24	3	1	22	53	2	.230
BENNETT	3-7	3.70	72	4	12	3	97.1	86	44	40	5	7	47	68	5	.243
RIDGWAY	1-0	3.72	10	0	2	0	9.2	7	4	4	3	1	1	8	0	.194
NUNEZ	1-2	3.86	23	0	7	0	32.2	32	14	14	0	1	19	24	2	.260
CAMPILLO	8-7	3.91	39	25	3	0	158.2	158	74	69	18	1	38	107	2	.262
GONZALEZ	0-3	4.28	36	0	29	14	33.2	26	21	16	6	1	14	44	0	.210
TAVAREZ	1-4	4.71	43	0	13	0	42	55	30	22	5	2	19	45	1	.311
ATL	1-3	3.89	36	0	12	0	34.2	42	20	15	5	2	14	35	1	.296
PARR	1-0	4.84	5	5	0	0	22.1	29	13	12	4	0	9	14	1	.315
HAMPTON	3-4	4.85	13	13	0	0	78	83	45	42	10	1	28	38	0	.281
GLAVINE	2-4	5.54	13	13	0	0	63.1	67	40	39	11	1	37	37	0	.288
REYES	3-11	5.81	23	22	0	0	113	134	77	73	18	3	52	78	2	.301
BOYER	2-6	5.88	76	0	18	1	72	73	51	47	10	2	25	67	2	.262
RESOP	0-1	5.89	16	0	9	0	18.1	16	12	12	2	2	10	13	0	.239
MORTON	4-8	6.15	16	15	0	0	74.2	80	56	51	9	2	41	48	2	.273
BUENO	0-0	7.71	1	0	0	0	2.1	5	2	2	1	0	1	1	0	.417
RING	2-1	8.46	42	0	8	0	22.1	32	25	21	2	2	10	16	0	.333
JAMES	2-5	9.10	7	7	0	0	29.2	36	30	10	3	0	20	22	1	.310
DESSENS	0-1	22.50	4	0	1	0	4	10	10	10	1	0	4	2	0	.500
DESALVO	0-0	31.50	2	0	0	0	2	11	7	7	0	0	2	2	0	.688
ATLANTA																
OPPONENTS	72-90	4.46	162	162	160	26	1,440.2	1,439	778	714	156	42	586	1,076	42	.263
	90-72	4.33	162	162	156	37	1,447	1,514	753	696	130	42	618	1,023	45	.270



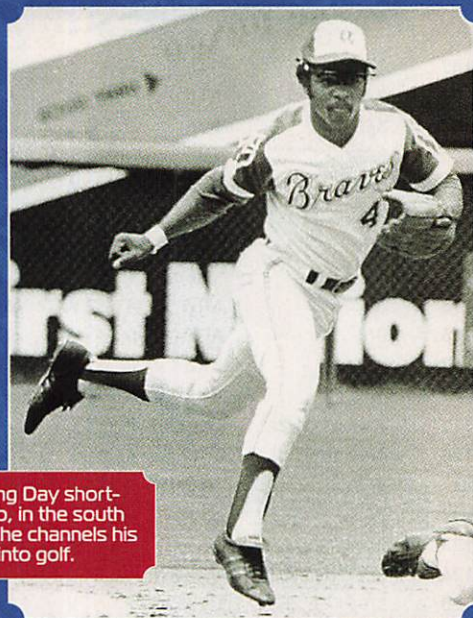
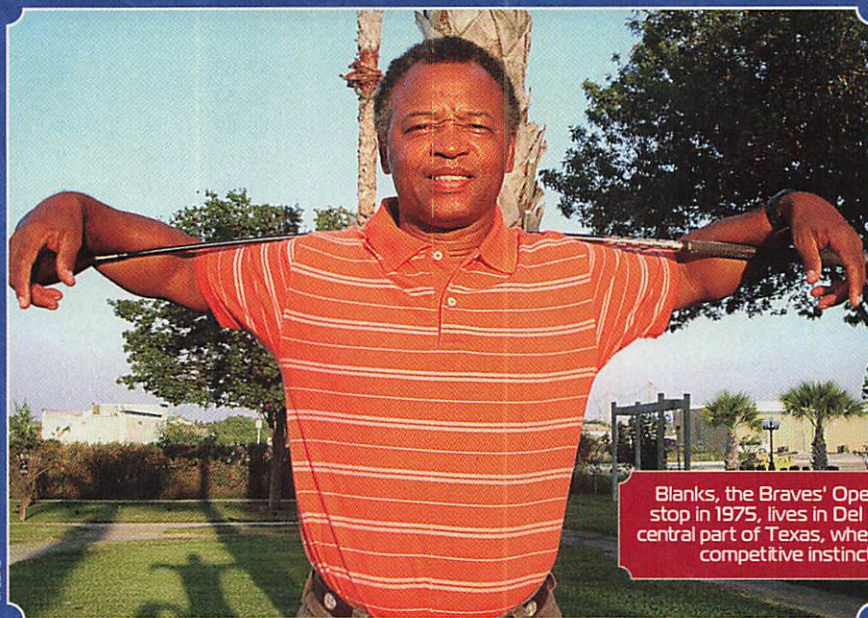
BY GAME

GAME	DATE	OPP	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRS	REC	POS	GB
1	3/30	WAS	A	L	2-3	Moylan (0-1)	Jones (1)	0-1	5	-1/2
2	3/31	PIT	H	L	11-12 (12)	Boyer (0-1)	McCann (1), Francoeur (1)	0-2	5	-2
3	4/2	PIT	H	W	10-2	Jurrjens (1-0)	Diaz (1), Teixeira (1), Escobar (1)	1-2	T-3	-2
4	4/3	PIT	H	L	3-4 (10)	Resop (0-1)	--	1-3	5	-2
5	4/5	NYM	H	W	11-5	Hudson (1-0)	Johnson (1)	2-3	T-4	-1
6	4/6	NYM	H	W	3-1	Smoltz (1-0)	Teixeira (2)	3-3	T-1	--
7	4/7	COL	A	L	1-2	Boyer (0-2)	--	3-4	T-2	-1
8	4/8	COL	A	L	3-4	Jurrjens (1-1)	Kotsay (1)	3-5	T-3	-1 1/2
9	4/9	COL	A	L	6-12	James (0-1)	McCann (2)	3-6	T-4	-2 1/2
10	4/11	WAS	A	W	3-0	Hudson (2-0)	Escobar (2)	4-6	4	-3
11	4/12	WAS	A	W	10-2	Smoltz (2-0)	Francoeur 2 (3), McCann (3)	5-6	4	-2
12	4/13	WAS	A	L	4-5	Glavine (0-1)	Jones (2)	5-7	4	-2
13	4/15	FLA	A	L	0-4	Jurrjens (1-2)	--	5-8	4	-3
14	4/16	FLA	A	L	5-6	Hudson (2-1)	Escobar (3)	5-9	4	-4
15	4/17	FLA	A	W	8-0	Smoltz (3-0)	Jones 2 (4), Teixeira (3), McCann (4), Johnson (2)	6-9	4	-3
16	4/18	LAD	H	W	6-1	Ohman (1-0)	Jones 2 (6)	7-9	4	-2 1/2
17	4/19	LAD	H	W	4-1	James (1-1)	--	8-9	3	-2 1/2
18	4/20	LAD	H	W	6-1	Jurrjens (2-2)	Johnson (3), Teixeira (4)	9-9	3	-2
19	4/21	WAS	H	W	7-3	Hudson (3-1)	McCann (5)	10-9	3	-2
20	4/22	WAS	H	L	0-6	Smoltz (3-1)	--	10-10	4	-2
21	4/23	FLA	H	L	2-7	Bennett (0-1)	Diaz (2)	10-11	4	-3
22	4/24	FLA	H	W	7-4	James (2-1)	Jones (7)	11-11	4	-2
23	4/25	NYM	A	W	6-3	Jurrjens (3-2)	Johnson (4)	12-11	3	-2
24	4/26	NYM	A	L	3-4	Hudson (3-2)	--	12-12	4	-2
25	4/27	NYM	A	L	3-6	Smoltz (3-2)	--	12-13	4	-3
26	4/29	WAS	A	L	3-6	Boyer (0-3)	Jones (8)	12-14	4	-3
27	4/30	WAS	A	L	2-3 (12)	Acosta (0-1)	--	12-15	4	-3
28	5/2	CIN	H	W	2-0	Hudson (4-2)	McCann (6)	13-15	4	-3
29	5/3	CIN	H	W	9-1	Reyes (1-0)	--	14-15	4	-2
30	5/4	CIN	H	W	14-7	Ring (1-0)	Jones (9), Kotsay (2)	15-15	4	-2
31	5/6	SD	H	W	5-3	Jurrjens (4-2)	Jones (10), Kotsay (3)	16-15	T-3	-1 1/2
32	5/7	SD	H	W	5-2	Hudson (5-2)	--	17-15	T-3	-1 1/2
33	5/8	SD	H	W	5-4	Acosta (1-1)	--	18-15	3	-1 1/2
34	5/9	PIT	A	L	2-3	Bennett (0-2)	--	18-16	4	-2 1/2
35	5/10	PIT	A	L	2-5	James (2-2)	Teixeira (5)	18-17	4	-3 1/2
36	5/12 (1 of 2)	PIT	A	L	0-5	Jurrjens (4-3)	--	18-18	4	-4 1/2
37	5/12 (2 of 2)	PIT	A	W	8-1	Hudson (6-2)	McCann (7)	19-18	4	-3 1/2
38	5/13	PHI	A	L	4-5	Reyes (1-1)	--	19-19	4	-3 1/2
39	5/14	PHI	A	W	8-6	Glavine (1-1)	Escobar (4), Jones (11), Johnson (5)	20-19	4	-2 1/2
40	5/15	PHI	A	L	0-5	James (2-3)	--	20-20	4	-3
41	5/16	OAK	H	W	3-2	Acosta (2-1)	--	21-20	4	-2
42	5/17	OAK	H	L	4-5	Hudson (6-3)	--	21-21	4	-3
43	5/18	OAK	H	W	5-2	Reyes (2-1)	--	22-21	4	-2
44	5/20 (1 of 2)	NYM	H	W	6-1	Glavine (2-1)	McCann (8)	23-21	3	-1 1/2
45	5/20 (2 of 2)	NYM	H	W	6-2	Campillo (1-0)	Kotsay (4)	24-21	2	-1 1/2
46	5/21	NYM	H	W	11-4	Jurrjens (5-3)	Jones (12), Francoeur (4)	25-21	2	-1 1/2
47	5/22	NYM	H	W	4-2	Hudson (7-3)	--	26-21	2	-1 1/2
48	5/23	ARZ	H	L	1-11	Reyes (2-2)	--	26-22	2	-1 1/2
49	5/24	ARZ	H	W	3-1	Boyer (1-3)	Francoeur (5)	27-22	2	-1
50	5/25	ARZ	H	L	3-9	Glavine (2-2)	--	27-23	2	-2 1/2
51	5/26	ARZ	H	W	7-3	Acosta (3-1)	McCann (9)	28-23	2	-2 1/2
52	5/27	MIL	A	L	2-3	Bennett (0-3)	Johnson (6), Blanco (1)	28-24	3	-2 1/2

GAME BY GAME

GAME	DATE	OPP	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRS	REC	POS	GB
53	5/28	MIL	A	L	0-1	Reyes (2-3)	--	28-25	3	-2 1/2
54	5/29	MIL	A	W	8-1	Campillo (2-0)	Teixeira (6)	29-25	3	-2
55	5/30	CIN	A	L	2-3 (11)	Ring (1-1)	--	29-26	3	-2 1/2
56	5/31	CIN	A	L	7-8 (10)	Acosta (3-2)	Norton (1), Teixeira (7), Francoeur (6)	29-27	3	-3
57	6/1	CIN	A	L	2-6	Hudson (7-4)	Teixeira (8), McCann (10)	29-28	4	-3 1/2
58	6/2	FLA	H	W	7-5 (10)	Ohman (2-0)	Francoeur (7), Teixeira (9), Escobar (5)	30-28	3	-3 1/2
59	6/3	FLA	H	W	5-4	Ohman (3-0)	Jones (13)	31-28	3	-3 1/2
60	6/4	FLA	H	L	4-6	Acosta (3-3)	--	31-29	T-3	-3 1/2
61	6/5	FLA	H	W	7-5	Jurrjens (6-3)	Escobar (6), McCann (11), Jones (14)	32-29	3	-3 1/2
62	6/6	PHI	H	L	3-4 (10)	Acosta (3-4)	McCann (12)	32-30	3	-4 1/2
63	6/7	PHI	H	L	2-6	Reyes (2-4)	Jones (15)	32-31	3	-5 1/2
64	6/8	PHI	H	L	3-6	Boyer (1-4)	Teixeira (10)	32-32	3	-6 1/2
65	6/10	CHC	A	L	5-10	Glavine (2-3)	Norton (2)	32-33	3	-6 1/2
66	6/11	CHC	A	L	2-7	Bennett (0-4)	Miller (1)	32-34	3	-6 1/2
67	6/12	CHC	A	L	2-3 (11)	Acosta (3-5)	Francoeur (8)	32-35	3	-7 1/2
68	6/13	LAA	A	W	5-2	Reyes (3-4)	--	33-35	3	-7 1/2
69	6/14	LAA	A	W	9-4	Morton (1-0)	B. Jones (1), Johnson (7)	34-35	3	-6 1/2
70	6/15	LAA	A	L	0-2	Campillo (2-1)	--	34-36	3	-6 1/2
71	6/16	COL	A	W	7-1	Jurrjens (7-3)	--	35-36	3	-6 1/2
72	6/17	TEX	A	L	5-7	Hudson (7-5)	Infante (1), McCann (13)	35-37	3	-6 1/2
73	6/18	TEX	A	W	5-2	Bennett (1-4)	Jones (16)	36-37	3	-5 1/2
74	6/19	TEX	A	L	4-5	Boyer (1-5)	--	36-38	4	-6
75	6/20	SEA	H	L	2-10	Campillo (2-2)	--	36-39	4	-6
76	6/21	SEA	H	W	5-4	Boyer (2-5)	Gotay (1)	37-39	4	5
77	6/22	SEA	H	W	8-3	Hudson (8-5)	Teixeira 3 (13), McCann (14)	38-39	4	-4
78	6/23	MIL	H	L	1-4	Reyes (3-5)	--	38-40	4	-4 1/2
79	6/24	MIL	H	L	3-4	Morton (1-1)	Teixeira (14)	38-41	4	-4 1/2
80	6/25	MIL	H	W	4-2	Campillo (3-2)	--	39-41	4	-4 1/2
81	6/27	TOR	A	W	4-0	Jurrjens (8-3)	Teixeira (15)	40-41	T-3	-3
82	6/28	TOR	A	L	5-9	Hudson (8-6)	Teixeira (16)	40-42	T-3	-4
83	6/29	TOR	A	L	0-1	Reyes (3-6)	--	40-43	4	-4
84	7/1	PHI	H	L	3-8	Morton (1-2)	--	40-44	4	-5
85	7/2	PHI	H	L	3-7	Campillo (3-3)	Gotay (2), Jones (17)	40-45	4	-6
86	7/3	PHI	H	L	1-4	Jurrjens (8-4)	--	40-46	4	-7
87	7/4	HOU	H	W	6-2	Hudson (9-6)	Johnson (8)	41-46	4	-7
88	7/5	HOU	H	L	1-6	Reyes (3-7)	McCann (15)	41-47	4	-7
89	7/6	HOU	H	W	7-6 (17)	Ring (2-1)	Jones (18)	42-47	4	-6
90	7/7	LAD	A	L	0-3	Campillo (3-4)	--	42-48	4	-6
91	7/8	LAD	A	W	9-3	Jurrjens (9-4)	McCann 2 (17), Teixeira (17)	43-48	4	-5
92	7/9	LAD	A	L	1-2	Hudson (9-7)	Francoeur (9)	43-49	4	-6
93	7/11	SD	A	L	0-4	Reyes (3-8)	--	43-50	4	-7 1/2
94	7/12	SD	A	W	4-1	Morton (2-2)	Lillibridge (1)	44-50	4	-6 1/2
95	7/13	SD	A	W	12-3	Campillo (4-4)	McCann (18)	45-50	4	-6 1/2
96	7/18	WAS	H	W	7-6	Hudson (10-7)	--	46-50	4	-6 1/2
97	7/19	WAS	H	L	2-8	Jurrjens (9-5)	Norton (3)	46-51	4	-6 1/2
98	7/20	WAS	H	L	6-15	Reyes (3-9)	Teixeira 2 (19), Prado (1)	46-52	4	-6 1/2
99	7/21	FLA	A	W	4-0	Campillo (5-4)	--	47-52	4	-6
100	7/22	FLA	A	L	0-4	Morton (2-3)	--	47-53	4	-7
101	7/23	FLA	A	W	9-4	Hudson (11-7)	--	48-53	4	-6
102	7/25	PHI	A	W	8-2	Jurrjens (10-5)	McCann 2 (20)	49-53	4	-6 1/2
103	7/26	PHI	A	L	9-10	Boyer (2-6)	Teixeira (20)	49-54	4	-6 1/2
104	7/27	PHI	A	L	10-12	Tavarez (0-3)	Johnson (9), Infante (2)	49-55	4	-7 1/2
105	7/28	STL	H	L	3-12	Morton (2-4)	--	49-56	4	-7 1/2
106	7/29	STL	H	L	3-8	Soriano (0-1)	--	49-57	4	-8 1/2

GAME	DATE	OPP	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRS	REC	POS	GB
107	7/30	STL	H	L	2-7	Jurrjens (10-6)	--	49-58	4	-9
108	7/31	STL	H	W	9-4	Bennett (2-4)	Infante (3), Sammons (1)	50-58	4	-9
109	8/1	MIL	H	L	0-9	James (2-4)	--	50-59	4	-9
110	8/2	MIL	H	L	2-4	Morton (2-5)	--	50-60	4	-9
111	8/3	MIL	H	W	5-0	Campillo (6-4)	--	51-60	4	-10
112	8/4	SF	A	L	2-4	Jurrjens (10-7)	--	51-61	4	-10 1/2
113	8/5	SF	A	W	11-4	Hampton (1-0)	--	52-61	4	-9 1/2
114	8/6	SF	A	L	2-3	James (2-5)	--	52-62	4	-10 1/2
115	8/7	ARZ	A	W	6-4	Morton (3-5)	Kotsay (5)	53-62	4	-9 1/2
116	8/8	ARZ	A	W	11-6	Campillo (7-4)	Jones (19)	54-62	4	-8 1/2
117	8/9	ARZ	A	W	11-4	Jurrjens (11-7)	McCann (21)	55-62	4	-8 1/2
118	8/10	ARZ	A	L	1-6	Hampton (1-1)	--	55-63	4	-9 1/2
119	8/13 (1 of 2)	CHC	H	L	2-10	Morton (3-6)	--	55-64	4	-9
120	8/13 (2 of 2)	CHC	H	L	0-8	Campillo (7-5)	--	55-65	4	-9
121	8/14	CHC	H	L	7-11	Glavine (2-4)	Kotsay (6), Francoeur (10)	55-66	4	-10
122	8/15	SF	H	L	1-5	Jurrjens (11-8)	--	55-67	4	-11
123	8/16	SF	H	W	11-5	Hampton (2-1)	Norton (4)	56-67	4	-11
124	8/17	SF	H	L	1-3	Morton (3-7)	--	56-68	4	-12
125	8/18	SF	H	L	0-5	Campillo (7-6)	--	56-69	4	-12
126	8/19	NYM	A	L	3-7	Bennett (2-5)	--	56-70	4	-13
127	8/20	NYM	A	L	3-6	Jurrjens (11-9)	--	56-71	4	-14
128	8/21	NYM	A	L	4-5	Nunez (0-1)	Escobar (7)	56-72	4	-15
129	8/22	STL	A	L	3-18	Morton (3-8)	Norton (5)	56-73	4	-16
130	8/23	STL	A	W	8-4	Carlyle (1-0)	--	57-73	4	-15
131	8/24	STL	A	L	3-6	Reyes (3-10)	--	57-74	4	-15
132	8/26	FLA	H	W	10-9	Ohman (4-0)	--	58-74	4	-15
133	8/27	FLA	H	L	1-4	Hampton (2-2)	--	58-75	4	-15 1/2
134	8/28	FLA	H	W	4-2	Morton (4-8)	McCann (22)	59-75	4	-15
135	8/29	WAS	A	L	3-7	Campillo (7-7)	Norton (6)	59-76	4	-16
136	8/30	WAS	A	L	8-9 (10)	Nunez (0-2)	McCann (23), Prado (2), Jones (20)	59-77	4	-16
137	8/31	WAS	A	L	4-8	Dessens (0-1)	Escobar (8)	59-78	4	-17
138	9/1	FLA	A	L	3-4	Gonzalez (0-1)	--	59-79	4	-18
139	9/2	FLA	A	W	16-14	Julio (1-0)	Anderson (1), Francoeur (11)	60-79	4	-18
140	9/3	FLA	A	L	3-5	Ohman (4-1)	--	60-80	4	-19
141	9/4	WAS	H	W	2-0	Parr (1-0)	--	61-80	4	-18 1/2
142	9/5	WAS	H	W	10-5	Jurrjens (12-9)	--	62-80	4	-17 1/2
143	9/6	WAS	H	L	8-5	Gonzalez (0-2)	Escobar (9)	62-81	4	-17 1/2
144	9/7	WAS	H	L	4-7 (14)	Bennett (2-6)	--	62-82	4	-18 1/2
145	9/9	COL	H	W	5-4 (10)	Tavarez (1-3)	--	63-82	4	-18 1/2
146	9/10	COL	H	W	9-5	Bennett (3-6)	Johnson 2 (11), Jones (21)	64-82	4	-18 1/2
147	9/11	COL	H	W	8-4	Jurrjens (13-9)	Escobar (10)	65-82	4	-18
148	9/13 (1 of 2)	NYM	A	W	3-2	Ridgway (1-0)	--	66-82	4	-17
149	9/13 (2 of 2)	NYM	A	L	0-5	Reyes (3-11)	--	66-83	4	-18
150	9/14	NYM	A	W	7-4	Julio (2-0)	Norton (7)	67-83	4	-17
151	9/16	PHI	H	L	7-8	Gonzalez (0-3)	--	67-84	4	-17
152	9/17	PHI	H	L	1-6	Jurrjens (13-10)	--	67-85	4	-18
153	9/18	PHI	H	L	3-4	Hampton (2-3)	Kotchman (13)	67-86	4	-19
154	9/19	NYM	H	L	5-9	Tavarez (1-4)	--	67-87	4	-19 1/2
155	9/20	NYM	H	W	4-2	Campillo (8-7)	--	68-87	4	-19
156	9/21	NYM	H	W	7-6	Julio (3-0)	--	69-87	4	-19
157	9/22	PHI	A	L	2-6	Bennett (3-7)	Johnson (12)	69-88	4	-20
158	9/23	PHI	A	W	3-2	Hampton (3-3)	Kotchman (14)	70-88	4	-19
159	9/24	PHI	A	W	10-4	Carlyle (2-0)	Jones (22)	71-88	4	-18
160	9/26	HOU	A	L	4-5	Tavarez (1-5)	--	71-89	4	-19
161	9/27	HOU	A	W	11-5	Nunez (1-2)	Anderson 2 (3)	72-89	4	-19
162	9/28	HOU	A	L	1-3	Hampton (3-4)	--	72-90	4	-20



Blanks, the Braves' Opening Day short-stop in 1975, lives in Del Rio, in the south central part of Texas, where he channels his competitive instincts into golf.

SUGAR BEAR

Larvell Blanks Dabbling In Pro Golf and Trying To Find a Teaching Job

BY BRIAN KNAPP

THE COMPETITIVE SPIRIT did not leave Larvell "Sugar Bear" Blanks when he left the major leagues at age 30 when many of his peers were entering their primes. Instead, he channeled his passion and fire into other areas of his life, most notably as a public school teacher and part-time professional golfer.

Having entered college after he wrapped up his baseball career in the Mexican League in 1986, Blanks earned a bachelor's degree in physical education from Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas, and was later certified as a public school teacher in Texas and Arizona.

"It's a profession where you get the chance to work with kids and enjoy getting them to be the best they can be," Blanks said. "You have a task that's important, to have a positive impact on someone's life."

Recent years have not been kind to the 58-year-old Blanks, as he has struggled to find work in a field where shortages are many.

"Right now, I'm unemployed," he said. "I've applied several places and haven't had any luck. I was a substitute all last year and re-applied over the summer. I haven't done any substituting this year, but I probably will. I'm hoping something comes along."

What's worse, Blanks' inability to find steady work teaching has prevented him from coaching since 2003. He had served previously as a junior high and high school tennis coach in Texas.

"I got into teaching to coach," Blanks said. "If you're going to coach, you need to be in education. The funny thing is, I haven't done much coaching."

In his spare time, Blanks dabbles in professional golf, where

he carries a three handicap and has competed on the Pepsi Tour, U.S. Pro Tour, International Players Tour, and Golf Channel Amateur Tour.

"I try to play in two to three tournaments a month, depending on my finances," he said. "I'm not working, so my funds are limited."

Blanks finished fifth in his most recent event – the Apple Rock Open in September at the Horseshoe Bay Resort in Horseshoe Bay, Texas. He shot an 82 in the one-day, 18-hole tournament.

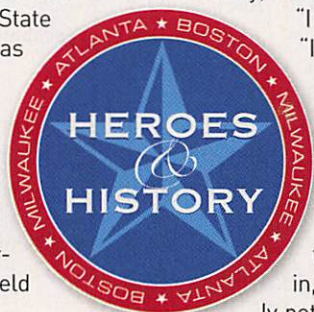
"I had a chance to win the whole thing," Blanks said. "I just didn't putt well. It was the first tournament I'd played in about six weeks. Practicing is one thing, but playing in a tournament gives you that edge."

With purses limited on smaller tours, Blanks admits he plays more for the thrill of competition than for prize money.

"You're not going to win a lot of money in these tournaments," he said. "It may cost you \$150 to get in, and there may only be a \$1,000 purse. It's definitely not something we're going to quit our day jobs for. It's just something you do if you enjoy competition. You get the clubs, and you start playing. I don't know what people do who work until five and just come home."

Blanks was first introduced to golf as a young caddie in Texas and then as a 20-year-old prospect in the Atlanta farm system. Chosen by the Braves in the third round of the 1969 draft (60th player overall), he was awarded his first set of clubs by a trading card company.

"I got a set of Sam Snead Wilson clubs back in 1970 from Topps," he said. "I'd moved around the South there, and I held onto them. Eventually, when I got away from baseball, I pulled out



the clubs and started hacking around with them. I caddied as a kid, and the game kind of sticks with you."

A scrappy, 5-foot-8 middle infielder, Blanks reached the major leagues in 1972 and spent parts of five seasons (1972-75, 1980) with Atlanta, batting .235, with 58 runs batted in and six homers in 282 games. He enjoyed his most productive season in 1975, when he was the Braves' starting shortstop on Opening Day and set career-highs in at-bats (471), runs (49), hits (110) and doubles (13).

"There are so many memorable moments when you make it to the big leagues," Blanks said. "Knowing you're going to be on that 25-man roster at the end of spring training... that's a big one. When you're doing the minor league thing in spring training, and you look across the fence and watch this other bunch of guys, you think to yourself, 'One day, I'd like to be over there doing that.'"

Blanks thinks often of the time he spent with the Braves.

"I learned to play baseball in that organization," he said.

He was traded to the White Sox in December 1975, in a big five-player deal. The Braves sent Blanks and Ralph Garr to the White Sox in exchange for outfielder Ken Henderson and pitchers Dick Ruthven and Danny Osborn. However, Chicago immediately traded him to Cleveland, where he spent three seasons, hitting a career-high .286 in 1977 (322 at-bats).

The Indians traded him to Texas for the 1979 season, and the Rangers sent him back to the Braves for 1980, along with Doyle Alexander, in exchange for Adrian Devine and Pepe Frias. In August of that season, the Braves released him. He signed with Pittsburgh in January 1981, but never made their big league roster. He left the game for good in 1986 with a .253 career batting average (20 HR, 172 RBIs) in nine seasons.

"I felt like I wasn't going anywhere," said Blanks, who was nicknamed Sugar Bear, supposedly because of his likeness to a cartoon character on boxes of Post Sugar Crisp cereal. "I'd played enough baseball and thought it was time for me to leave it. Some guys are fortunate enough to stay in the game 15-20 years after they leave it. I wasn't one of them."

A father to four children, who range in age from 24 to 36, and grandfather of two, ages 4 and 9, Blanks - who turns 59 in January - now resides in Del Rio, Texas, near the Mexican border in the south central part of the state.

HOW I MADE IT TO THE MAJORS

CHRIS RICE

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/
PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

BY STEVE FALL

WHEN BRAVES minor leaguers first join the organization, they have a lot on their mind. For many, it marks their first time away from home. Chris Rice helps make their lives easier after they're drafted.

"That's when we start signing the players, and then I become involved," said Rice, the Braves' administrative assistant in player development. "They become my boys then. I have 200 sons."

Rice handles logistics relating to travel, contracts, and other key areas for more than 200 minor leaguers on seven different farm teams. She enters transactions into the Major League system that tracks player movement, and makes sure that all clubs match their roster limit. Her focus changes, depending on the time of year.

"In January and February, it's getting contracts and the spring training information out to the players," said Rice, who was born in Kansas City and moved to Colorado as a nine-year-old. "During spring training, I handle all their meal money. At the end spring training, I do all the player moves in the computer to get them to the proper roster. During the season, it's constant moving. It all emanates from the major league club and trickles down. Every time a player gets hurt or moved, that's not the end of it. There's another move, a counter move."

Rice has spent four decades in baseball. If things had gone a bit differently, it may never have happened.

"It was just absolutely being in the right place at the right time," she said.

While Rice worked for the Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, the Royals temporarily shared their office space after owner Ewing Kauffman landed the expansion franchise in 1968. Rice got to know general manager Cedric Tallis and his assistant. The Royals then hired her in the spring of 1968, one year before they entered the American League.

Rice worked 14 years with the Royals, at the same time as John Schuerholz. Former Houston general manager Dick Wagner later asked her to join the Astros. She worked there for five and a half years, and then moved on to the Colorado Rockies for nine seasons. Schuerholz called Rice and asked her to join the Braves in September 1999. She has held a similar position for each organization, except in Houston, where she worked for the general manager.

"Throughout my career, it's always been about the people for me," said Rice, who recalls rooting for the Milwaukee Braves in the 1957 and 1958 World Series when Lou Burdette was her favorite player. "I've met some just incredible people that I never, ever would have met otherwise. It's a wonder to me when I think about it, and how lucky I am to have known people like Art Howe, Don Baylor, Clint Hurdle and John Schuerholz."

Rice believes that the minor leagues make a great starting point for people looking to work in baseball.

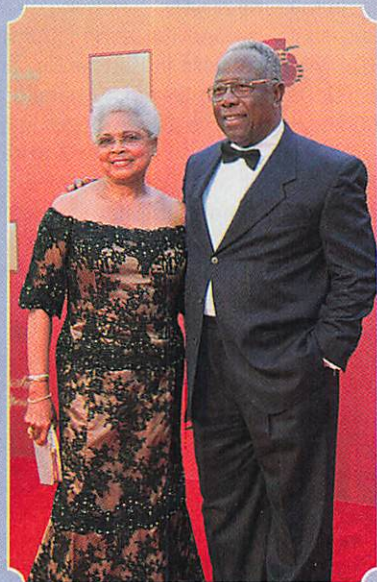
"You learn everything there," she said. "You'll go from popping popcorn to pulling the tarp in the same day. You get to know the kids and what baseball is about, as far as the transition from rookie [leagues] to short-season A to low A to high A. You just get such a feel for the heart of the game."



ATLANTA BRAVES



Hank Aaron (OF/1B, 1954-74) and his wife, Billye, attended the opening of the 200,000 square foot Tyler Perry Studios in southwest Atlanta on Oct. 4. The couple led a list of celebrities including Barry Bonds, Will Smith, Gladys Knight, Cicely Tyson, Sidney Poitier and Oprah Winfrey. The Tyler Perry Studios is the first major television and movie studio owned and run by an African-American film producer. Perry is a playwright, director, and producer of movies, plays and the television sitcom, Tyler Perry's House of Payne. The Aarons also hosted a vice-presidential debate watching party on Oct. 2 at the Atlanta home of Mack Wilbourne. The party was a fundraiser for the Obama/Biden ticket.



LONDON ENTERTAINMENT/SPASH NEWS

ager **Ned Yost** (Coach, 1991-2002) Sept. 15.

Wally Joyner (1B, 2000) resigned as San Diego's hitting coach Sept. 22.

Mickey Vernon (1B/OF, 1959) died Sept. 24 at age 90.

Joe Torre (C, 1960-68; Manager, 1982-84) is among 10 former players whose careers began in 1943 or later who are under consideration by the Veterans Committee for election into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. The Veterans Committee consists of 64 living Hall of Famers. Candidates need to receive 75 percent of the vote to earn election. Results will be announced Dec. 8 during baseball's winter meetings in Las Vegas.

The Dodgers put **Andruw Jones** (OF, 1996-2007) on the 60-day disabled list Sept. 13 to rehabilitate his right knee that was operated on earlier in the season. He was not on the Dodgers' post-season roster and reportedly planned to play winter ball in the Dominican Republic in an attempt to rebuild his performance.

Clarence "Cito" Gaston (OF/1B, 1967, '75-78) received a two-year contract extension to manage the Toronto Blue Jays through 2010.

Wes Helms (1B/3B/OF, 1998, 2000-02) re-signed with the Marlins, who gave him a two-year contract.

Due to Hurricane Ike, the Knuckle Ball scheduled Sept. 22 at Houston's Minute Maid Park to benefit aneurysm research, was postponed to a yet undermined date. The event was created by Natalie Niekro, daughter of **Joe Niekro** (RHP, 1973-74), who died of an aneurysm in 2006.

Phil Niekro (RHP, 1964-83, '87) was among the participants in the 12th annual Ocean Spray Celebrity Classic to benefit Special Olympics is Sept. 15 at Ballymeade in North Falmouth, Mass.

The Tigers announced they won't pick up the \$12 million option on **Edgar Renteria**'s (SS, 2006-07) contract for next season. However, they did not rule out re-signing him once he becomes a free agent.

The Washington Nationals fired **Pat Corrales** (Coach, 1990-2006) and their other major league coaches after the season.

The Milwaukee Brewers fired man-

BIRTHDAYS

NOVEMBER

1 ST	CHICO RUIZ (57)
2 ND	GEORGE ESTOCK (84) RON REED (66) TOM PACIOREK (62) YUNEL ESCOBAR (26)
3 RD	GARRY HILL (62)
4 TH	TITO FRANCONA (75) CHRIS RESOP (26)
5 TH	CRAIG MCMURTRY (49) JAVY LOPEZ (38)
6 TH	BOB ADDIS (83) DON WENGERT (39) JUSTIN SPEIER (35) ADAM LAROCHE (29)
7 TH	CLARENCE JONES (67) RUSS SPRINGER (40) TRAVIS SMITH (36)
8 TH	DWIGHT SMITH (45) JEFF BLAUSER (43)
9 TH	BOB GIBSON (73) DION JAMES (46) CHUCK JAMES (27)
10 TH	GENE CONLEY (78) BILL SOUTHWORTH (63) ANDRES THOMAS (45) KEITH LOCKHART (44) MICAH BOWIE (34)
11 TH	ROBERTO HERNANDEZ (44)
12 TH	JODY DAVIS (52)
13 TH	GENE GARBER (61) DAN PETRY (50)
15 TH	NORMIE ROY (80) JACK SMITH (73) RICK LUECKEN (48) PEDRO BORBON (41) KEVIN GRIBOSKI (35)
16 TH	FRANK BOLLING (77) DREW DENSON (43)
17 TH	DAN OSINSKI (75) AUBREY GATEWOOD (70) ELI MARRERO (35)
18 TH	GARY SHEFFIELD (40)
19 TH	JOE MORGAN (78) TED TURNER (70)
20 TH	JAY RITCHIE (72) HERM STARRETTE (70) DUANE THEISS (55) KEVIN LOMON (37) J.D. DREW (33) JO-JO REYES (24)
21 ST	MARK EICHHORN (48)
22 ND	WADE BLASINGAME (65) RICK MATULA (55) OSCAR VILLARREAL (27)
23 RD	FRANK TEPEDINO (61) BROOK JACOBY (49) AARON SMALL (37)
24 TH	DAMIAN MOSS (32) HORACIO RAMIREZ (29)
25 TH	MARK WHITEN (42) OCTAVIO DOTEL (35)
26 TH	JAY HOWELL (53) BOB WALK (52)
27 TH	KEN RAY (34)
28 TH	WALT WEISS (45) JOHN BURKETT (44) ADAM BERNERO (32)
30 TH	JUAN BERENGUER (54) STEVE SHIELDS (50) CRAIG WILSON (32)



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GIVING THANKS

WRITING A COLUMN like this after a fourth-place finish and the worst Braves record since 1990 may seem strange, but actually, the sentiment is even more heartfelt now than it would have been after a first-place finish.

If nothing else, it's the right month for it... So, here goes.

- I am thankful that baseball and the Braves somehow caught my fancy when I was 8 years old.

- I'm thankful for those good folks in Oklahoma who keep alive memories of the greatest lefthander of all by presenting the Warren Spahn Award each year.

- I'm thankful for Hank Aaron, Eddie Mathews, Warren Spahn, Lou Burdette, Del Crandall, Joe Adcock, Johnny Logan, Wes Covington, Red Schoendienst, Billy Bruton, Don McMahon, Bob Buhl and the rest of the 1957-58 Braves that gave this franchise such an indelible legacy long before 1991 came along.

- I'm thankful that John Schuerholz shocked the baseball world by leaving Kansas City to move to Atlanta and run the Braves in the fall of 1990.

- I'm thankful that Skip was at the microphone when Sid slid home in 1992.

- I'm thankful for Turner Field, a great ballpark.

- I'm thankful that Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium is now a parking lot but left us many wonderful memories.

- I'm thankful for all ChopTalk subscribers, who allow me to combine my passions for Braves baseball and editing.

- I'm thankful David Justice hit that home run and that Tom Glavine had ice water in his veins the night of Oct. 28, 1995.

- I'm thankful that Dale Murphy and Phil Niekro came our way and that there are still two such wonderful men on the face of the earth.

- I'm thankful that Bobby Cox decided he was more comfortable in the dugout than in the office.

- I'm thankful for Terry Pendleton, Mark Lemke, Steve Avery, John Smoltz, Mark Wohlers, Tom Glavine, Rafael Belliard, Jeff Blauser, David Justice, Sid Bream, Ron Gant, Greg Olson, Otis Nixon, Charlie Leibbrandt, Alejandro Pena, Lonnie Smith and all the other players who started it all and gave the Tampa Bay

Rays and every other downtrodden team something to shoot for.

- I'm thankful the Yankees didn't make the post-season this year, likely ensuring that the Braves' run of 14 straight trips to the playoffs will never be matched.

- I'm thankful that even though Chipper Jones' body knows it's aging, his bat hasn't figured it out yet.

- I'm thankful that as exciting as it can be to bring in big-name free agents, that Frank Wren realizes the best way to spend money is to put it into scouting and player development. Of course, a free agent or two this off-season would be reason for extra special thanks!

- I'm thankful for the big cow in left field. I'm not real sure why, but when you finish fourth, it's nice to have as much to hang onto as possible.

- I'm still very thankful to all the contributors who helped make the Warren Spahn statue in Monument Grove a reality.

- I'm thankful for the Boston Braves Historical Association and the Milwaukee Braves Historical Association because they refuse to forget.

- I'm thankful that Johnny Logan is Johnny Logan, and not because he was a great shortstop - but because of his energy and drive, without which there wouldn't be a stunning monument to the Milwaukee Braves standing outside Miller Park.

- I'm thankful for all the current and former Braves who sign all those Christmas cards each year so we can give you something special for the holidays.

- I'm thankful that the mighty Bronx Bombers couldn't figure out what Lou Burdette from little ol' Nitro, W.Va., was doing to them in the '57 Series.

- I am beyond thankful to the families of Warren Spahn and Lou Burdette who gave me the unthinkable honor of delivering their eulogies.

- I'm thankful that there were men like Paul Snyder, Johnny Sain and the late Bill Lucas, all Braves Hall of Famers, who helped show me the way.

- Most of all, I'm thankful that after all these years, I'm still a Braves fan.

THIS ISSUE OF CHOPTALK was mailed Oct. 23. The December issue will be mailed Nov. 25.

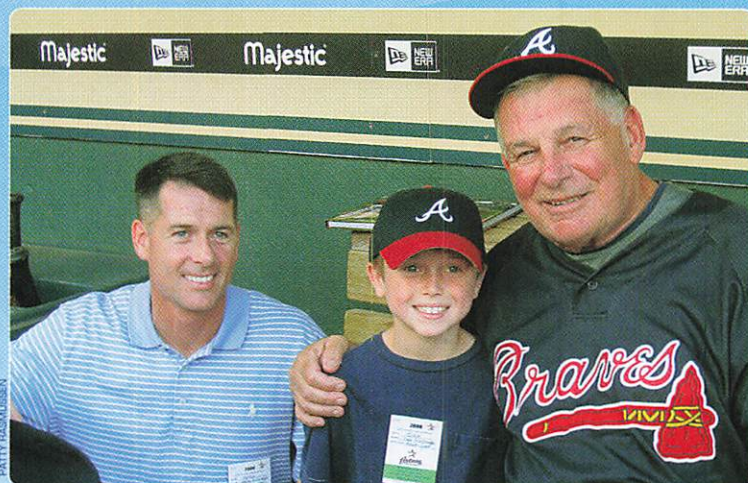
BEYOND BASEBALL

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN



Astronaut Shane Kimbrough, who plans to take a signed Chipper Jones jersey into space this month, and his son, Zack, visit with Bobby Cox in Houston.

SPACEBALL



ASTRONAUT Lieutenant Colonel **Shane Kimbrough** and his family visited some of their favorite players during Braves batting practice at Minute Maid Park on Sept. 27. Kimbrough, a former Atlantan now living in Houston near the astronaut training center at Johnson Space Center, is a mission specialist on the Shuttle Endeavor, scheduled to launch on Nov. 16. He, his wife, **Robbie**, mother, **DeAnn Johnson**, and the Kimbrough children, daughters **Kaitlyn** and **Taylor** and son, **Zack**, enjoyed a meet and greet with coaches and players including **Chipper Jones**. Kimbrough will take a signed Chipper Jones jersey with him on his two-week mission.

BB

BRIAN MCCANN (below) celebrated the end of the season with a haircut from Braves barber, relief pitcher **Jeff Bennett**. McCann planned to sport a Mohawk haircut for the next-to-last game, but a teammate jostled Bennett's arm while he was creating the style, so McCann ended up with a shaved head...

It's always nice to have connections. In this case, the connection is **Walter Victor**, the long-time Braves photographer. On a rain soaked afternoon at Turner Field, Victor photographed his visiting great-great-nephews, **James**, **Nathan** and **Noah McKane** of Archbald, Pa., sitting in the dugout with **Bobby Cox**. "It was so exciting for all of us," said **Mary Terese McKane**, the boys' mother and Victor's great-niece, describing their opportunity to go on the field. "Even though it was a rainout, we had a great time. And we went to the game the next day. My husband, **James**, is a life-long Braves fan..."

It's great to be green! Just ask **John Smoltz** and **Ryan Klesko**, owners of Big K Farm, 1,600 acres of prime central Georgia forest land and the first location to be accepted in the new Georgia Carbon Registry which measures and documents the number of metric tons of carbon dioxide stored in a forest and out of the atmosphere. Companies use the registry to find landowners who provide carbon benefits, and pay those landowners to keep their land undeveloped, reducing further damage to the environment.



Participants are required to provide detailed documentation of how the land has been used in the past decade. They must also have a stewardship plan, tree farm certification and other proof of sustainability. "John Smoltz and Ryan Klesko are really leading the way with their example," said **Josh Love**, coordinator of the registry. "They've done a great job of managing their land." The Big K Farm was approved as a Certified Stewardship Forest in 2005 and was named the 2006 Georgia Tree Farm of the Year...

Travel is in the offing for **Jeff** and **Catie Francoeur**. Immediately after the season, the couple traveled to their home in Seaside, Fla., for a week of R&R, followed by a fun-filled week with friends in Costa Rica (Oct. CT). In November, the Francoeurs will travel to New Zealand for a 9-day adventure, visiting Catie's brother who moved to New Zealand after graduating from the University of Georgia. "We'll fly to L.A., stay one night, then fly another 13 hours to New Zealand," said Jeff. In December, Jeff and Catie will take a family ski trip to Vail, Colo...

Will Ohman took an unconventional route to Houston for the final series of the season. He flew commercial from Philadelphia to Atlanta following the final game against the Phillies. Unfortunately his flight was delayed for hours, putting him in Atlanta early the morning of the off-day with a 10-hour drive ahead of him. After picking up his beagle pup,



THE FINALE

AMONG THE FAMILIES in Houston for the final series of the year were (L-R) **Rachel Bennett (Jeff)**, **Lauren Johnson (Kelly)**, and **Ginsey Boyer (Blaine)**. The Bennetts celebrated their fifth wedding anniversary with a kid-free weekend. Daughters **Ali (3)** and **Elle (18 months)** spent the final days of the season with their grandparents in Nashville, Tenn. After the season, the Bennett family took a family trip to Kiawah Island, S.C.

"Crash", Ohman drove to Houston, arriving in the wee hours of the morning. Wife, **Allyson**, and the two-year-old twins, **Jack** and **Annabel**, flew back to the family's off-season home in Arizona. After the final game of the season, Ohman drove the remaining distance, from Houston to Phoenix. The family intends to stay in Arizona until their two-week trip to Hawaii at Christmas...

Pete Van Wieren and wife, **Elaine**, embarked on a two-week Mediterranean cruise Oct. 28. They plan to make a number of stops at exotic ports of call in Italy, including Venice, Pompeii, Rome and Pisa, then stop in Dubrovnik, on the extreme southern coast of Croatia, Corfu in Greece, and Monte Carlo, Monaco and Barcelona, Spain...

Chris Glavine's 4th Annual Tribute to Our Quiet Heroes Luncheon was a smashing success, netting over \$210,000! The luncheon to benefit CURE Childhood Cancer, honors the caregivers of children with cancer, and drew over 500 guests, including two tables of Braves wives and other friends. Among those in attendance were **Kim Hudson**, **Catie Francoeur**, **Ashley McCann**, **Ronnie Snitker**, **Ginsey Boyer** and **Lauren Johnson**. **Kris Cather**, wife of former Braves pitcher **Mike Cather**, was also on hand, as was a special guest, **Tom Glavine**. It was the first time he was able to attend, because the past three years he was pitching for New York. The live auction included a "Day at the Glavines" which sparked a bidding war and finally went for \$10,000. Hundreds of unique silent auction items included a guitar signed by the Jonas Brothers. The guitar was also offered on eBay and fetched \$1,575...

Samantha Brown, host of the Travel

Channel's *Passport to Great Weekends*, got a personal pitching lesson from **John Smoltz** on Sept. 20 when she was in Atlanta filming an episode of her show for next season. Smoltz showed Brown how to throw his signature fastball during a bullpen session. She also chatted with **Catie Francoeur**, **Ginsey Boyer** and **Lauren Johnson** in one of

the luxury suites at Turner Field. The program will air next April, just in time for the start of the season...

Former Braves outfielder **Brian Jordan** was the grand marshal of the DeKalb County Sheriff's Reserve's motorcycle "Ride to Combat Domestic Violence" held Oct. 5.



GONE FISHING

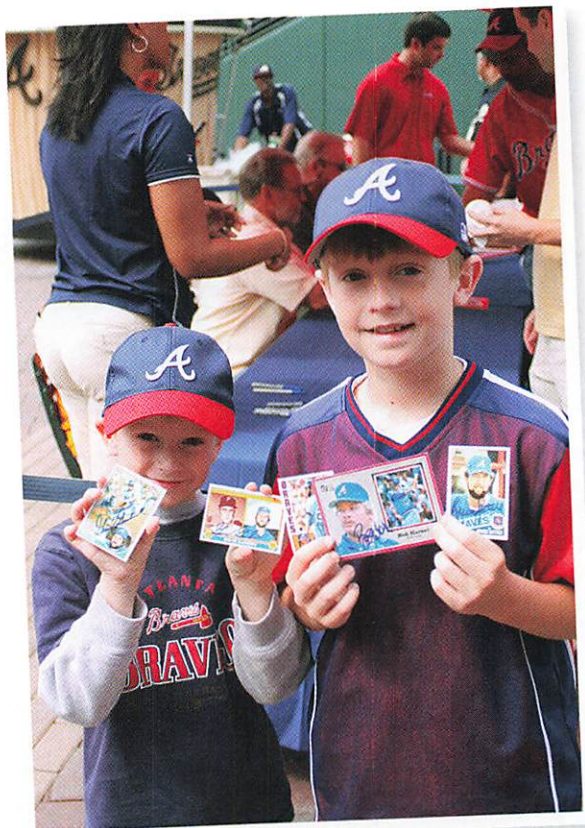
BENCH COACH Chino Cadahia, wife, **Lynn**, and daughter, **Lauren**, spent some quality time together touring the Georgia Aquarium on Sept. 30. "We spent most of the day there," said Lynn.

"The Beluga whales and whale sharks were our favorites, and we're looking forward to maybe going again before the season starts." The Cadahias live in Peachtree City, south of Atlanta

TALKIN' CHOP

LETTERS & PHOTOS FROM OUR READERS

WHETHER YOU'RE HAVING FUN AT TURNER FIELD, EXPERIENCING A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH YOUR FAVORITE BRAVES PLAYER, OR JUST SHOWING OFF YOUR COLLECTION OF BRAVES STUFF OR TRYING ON YOUR NEW BRAVES SHIRT, WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT AND SEE A PICTURE.



AUTOGRAPH HOUNDS

Our family attended the last Braves home game on Sept. 21. My boys (Jacob 11 and Nathan 7) were very excited after meeting former Braves greats, Bob Horner, Gene Garber and Bruce Sutter. The boys are holding several old baseball cards they got autographed. The icing on the cake was a comeback victory over our old enemies, the New York Mets! We enjoy reading ChopTalk and thought we would share our picture after seeing this month's Talkin' Chop. See you next year!

SCOTT HALES
Duluth, Ga.

ROGER THAT!

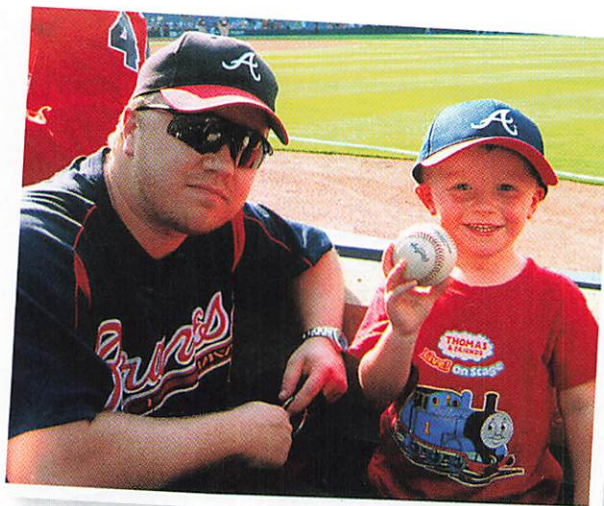
Our family recently attended a Braves game, and our oldest son, Colin (age 3), received his now most-prized possession. Pitching coach Roger McDowell made Colin's day when he handed him a baseball used during pre-game warmups. Colin loves the Braves and baseball. He's made it clear that he will be playing in the major leagues one day, and he hopes it's for the Braves. Thanks for making our trip to the park a day to remember.

ANDY & ANGIE SMITH
Indian Mound, Tenn.

SOMETHING'S MISSING

I've lived in Richmond since 2000, and I've been a Braves fan for as long as I can remember. Every summer since moving here, I've loved the opportunity to go to The Diamond and watch the R-Braves. My wife and I have been able to see future major leaguers and current major leaguers. Now, we're dealing with the news that the Braves are moving out of The Diamond. Everyone in this city regrets the circumstances that led to this, and we will truly miss the Braves. Those summer nights at the ballpark will never be replaced. My subscription to ChopTalk has become even more important now that I can't check on the status of the Triple-A club by driving down the street.

JAMES BALDWIN
Mechanicsville, Va.

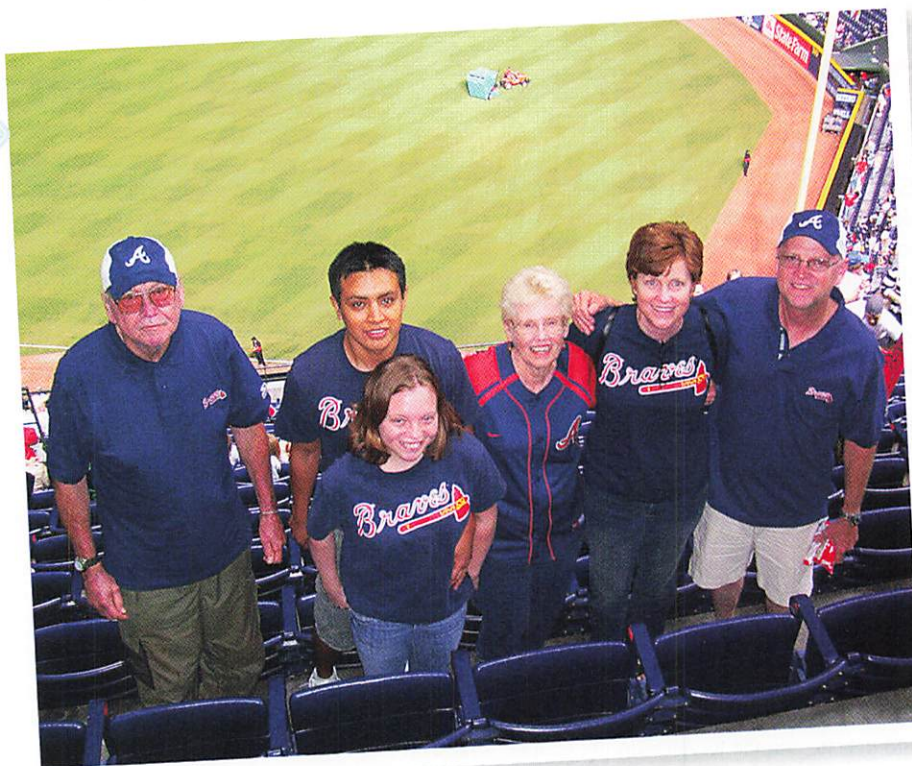


CHOPTALK AND THE ATLANTA BRAVES SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

ANNIVERSARY OUTING

Ten years ago, I had a liver transplant. The following year, we attended our first Braves game, and the next year, we made it an annual tradition. Family members who can, join us. Here we are on my 10th anniversary following a win over the Mets - so we are really happy. I'm on the left. Next to me are my granddaughter, Kate, and her husband, Diego. In the middle is my wife of 54 years, Carol, and on the far right are our daughter, Hilda, and son, Bill.

BILL CUBBERLEY
Cowan, Tenn.



FIELD OF DREAMS

My son, Ethan, and I flew to Atlanta from Iowa to watch the Braves vs. the Giants Aug. 16 and 17. We sat in section 107, just a few seats from the field, and had a great view of the action. Walter Banks was our usher, and he treated us like royalty. This was our first trip to Turner Field, but after this great weekend, we plan on returning every year!

CHAD ZAHN
Burlington, Iowa

SHARE YOUR BRAVES FEVER!

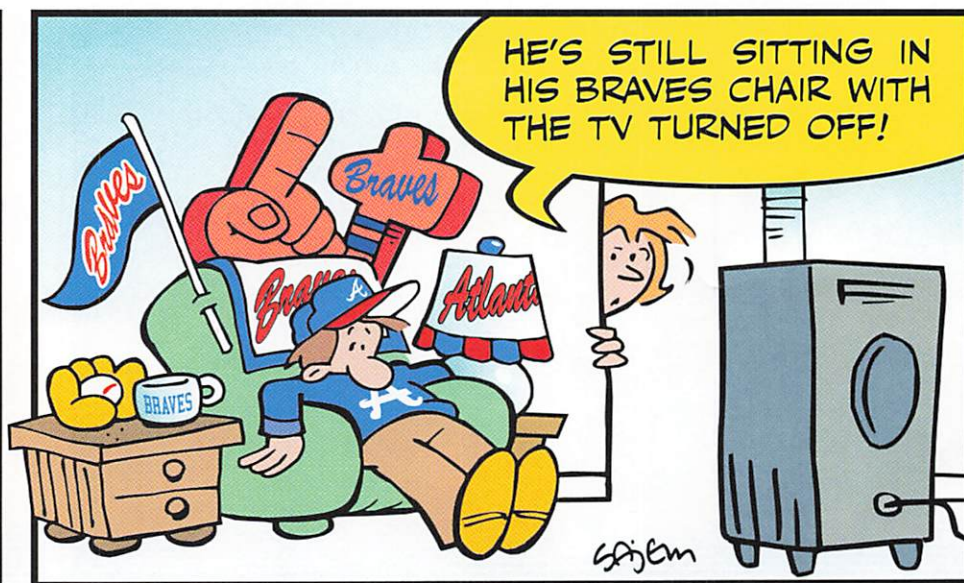
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Atlanta Braves
P.O. Box 4064
Atlanta, Ga. 30302
For the Braves players, Bobby Cox, the coaches, broadcasters, or members of the front office.
If you request a response, be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Never send anything of value that you want returned. This is no guarantee of a reply.

NOVEMBER BLUES



TOMAHAWK CHANT WITH A TWIST

BY JON ROSS

IT'S A SIMPLE MOTION - form a blade with your hand and rock it up and down, bending at the elbow. For Braves fans, it's as familiar as Bobby Cox or Chipper Jones.

Signs of the tomahawk "chop" and its accompanying 10-note "chant" are everywhere at Turner Field. High above left field, a 40-foot high Chick-fil-A cow extols fans to Du The Chop, and animated tomahawks light up the stadium's omnipresent video screens.

But two years ago, bassist Rick Maldonado and his band, QuoZ, set out to give the Braves' chant new life.

When Maldonado, who covers Braves games as an audio engineer for TBS, was asked to record an update of the rally cry, he jumped at the opportunity. Braves officials had already been playing his band's music at the stadium, so it was only natural that QuoZ would get the chance to spice up the chant.

In 2005, Maldonado, singer Chris Garner, guitarist Brian Molin, and drummer David Kirkus went into the studio and filled out the standard melody with distorted guitars and a booming bass line. The tune, which had been imported from Florida State University by Deion Sanders during the Braves' worst to first season, suddenly had a contemporary rock feel.

"I remember the first time Deion ran around the bases and did the chop," said

Maldonado, who learned the song as an FSU student in the 1980s before he moved to Atlanta in 1990 and became a Braves fan.

"I was going, 'No, that's not right. These people can't chop. That's a Seminole thing.' Eventually, I learned to embrace it," he said.

After only a year together as a band, QuoZ recorded the tune at Nickel and Dime Studios in Atlanta while starting work on the group's debut release, *Slap in the Face*. A fall tour in support of the CD, which will bring a sound Maldonado classifies as "a mix between Count Basie and two frogs in a blender" to a wider audience, is now in the planning stages.

Even though *Slap in the Face* isn't in stores yet, Atlantans have been listening to QuoZ's music at Turner Field long before they ever laid eyes on Casey Kotchman in a Braves uniform.

"The first time I heard [our chop song] in the stadium, I wasn't sure how to react," he said. "I've got goosebumps right now thinking about that moment, and my hair's standing up on my arms."

In his job for TBS, Maldonado has had a front-row seat to countless Braves highlights. He remembers Skip Caray's call and Sid Bream's slide, and he was there during Andruw Jones' first interview as a Brave. But his most cherished memories involve

presidents.

"One of my favorite memories was in 1995 when I had the honor of holding the phone with Mr. [Bill] Clinton on the other line and handing the phone to Ted Turner to talk to the president after they won the World Series," he said.

QuoZ's contemporary chop is now played side by side with the old song. Maldonado points out that the original version is more accessible to fans, so QuoZ's chant is saved for late in the game when the Braves are looking for an extra push.

"They don't use it at the beginning of the game only because I think it's a little bit easier for fans to lock on to the normal chop," Maldonado said, mimicking the whistle count-off of the original version. "They use it when the Braves are rallying, and it's late in the game and they need some energy."



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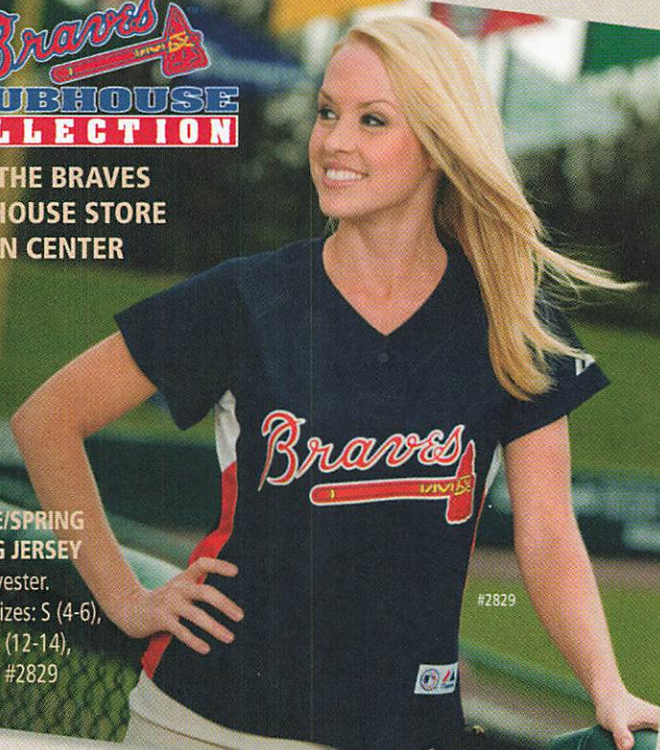


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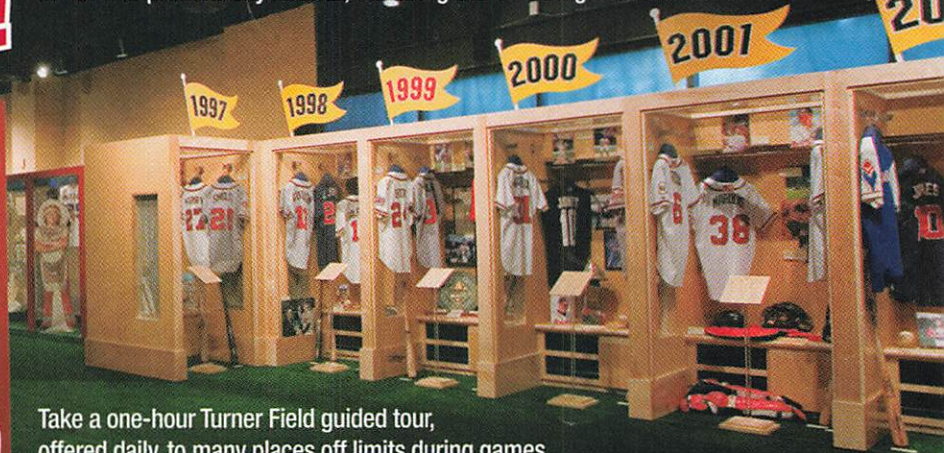


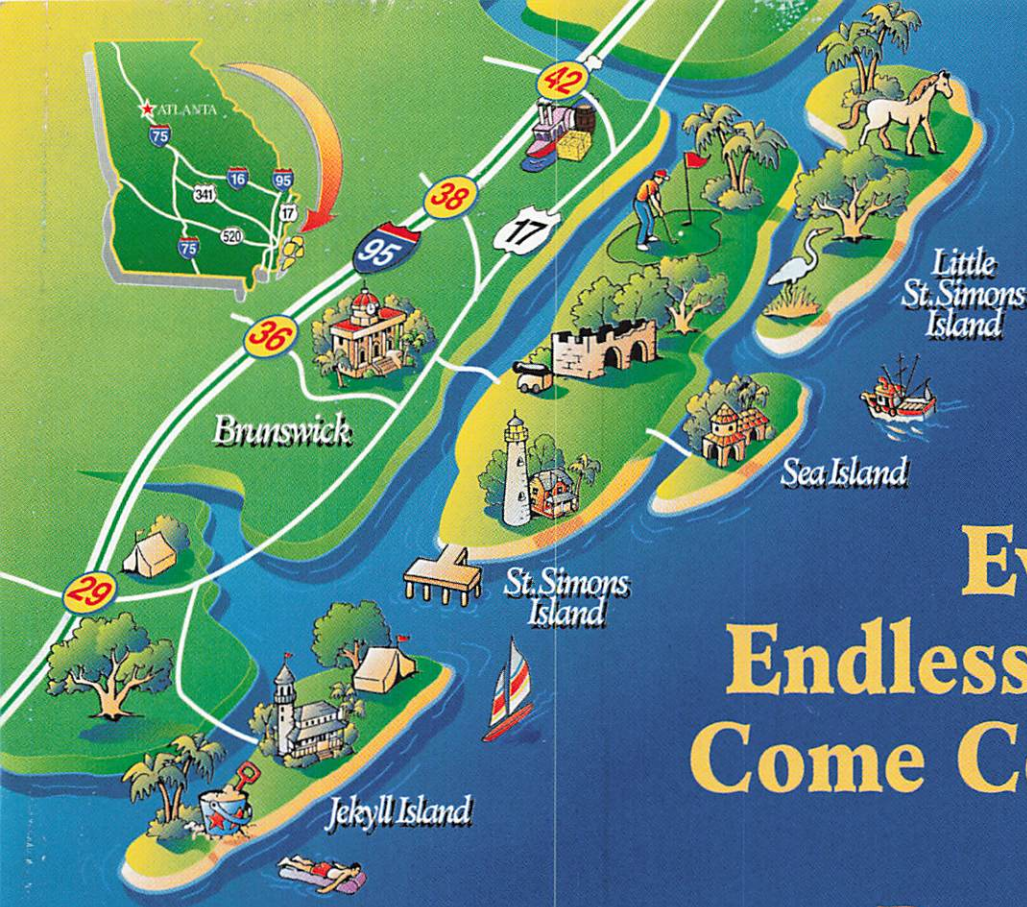
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